

For Reference

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

For Reference

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

Ex LIBRIS
UNIVERSITATIS
ALBERTAENSIS



Regulations Regarding Theses and Dissertations

[illegible]

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

IMAGERY AND SYMBOLISM IN THE PRELUDE

BY

SHEKA H. KANU

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS.

Department of English.

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
September, 1967.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Imagery and Symbolism in The Prelude", submitted by Sheka H. Kanu in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Date 18th Oct. , 1967.

ABSTRACT

This study of The Prelude is an exercise in practical criticism. The poem itself is therefore the focus of attention, with cross references and biographical details coming in only when absolutely necessary. The first chapter is introductory, setting out Wordsworth's views on imagery and symbolism and relating these to modern views in order to show Wordsworth's contribution in this important field. Chapter II examines 'wind' and 'water', two of the most recurrent images in The Prelude, emphasising the poet's versatility as he moves from the traditional to a peculiarly Wordsworthian usage of these symbols. Chapter III is a study of the interaction between man and nature, using the image of the traveller as the basis of organisation. But since the journey is physical as well as imaginative, its starting point in childhood has received some attention. A long journey, however, has its disappointments as well as its consolations; these have therefore been treated in Chapter IV. The poet's acute social consciousness, as revealed through his imagery, is examined in such varying 'episodes' as the encounter with the discharged soldier; his anger over the frivolous life of most people at Cambridge and London; and the excesses of the Reign of Terror. Throughout this study, however, natural imagery has been given prominence because of its predominance in The Prelude.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am happy to acknowledge, with gratitude, my indebtedness to my teachers, especially to Professor E.D. Jones of Fourah Bay College, The University of Sierra Leone, for stimulating my interest in English Literature, and to Professor J.F. Lauber of The University of Alberta, whose provocative seminars on the Romantics determined my choice of the subject of this study. Professor Lauber's advice and encouragement have been very helpful in times of difficulties.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I On Imagery and Symbolism	1
II Natural Imagery (1) - Wind and Water	24
III Natural Imagery (2) - Landscape and People	53
IV Imagery and Mood	88
Notes - Chapter I.	115
Notes - Chapter II	118
Notes - Chapter III.	120
Notes - Chapter IV	122
Bibliography	123

CHAPTER ONE

On Imagery and Symbolism

Wordsworth is a reluctant theorist. Even his theory of poetic diction which has been carefully studied is no more than a synthesis of fragments scattered over a number of essays, letters, prefaces and poems. And inspite of his frequent use of the word image his views on imagery and symbolism are even more difficult to reconstruct from his essays and other prose fragments. But statements--sometimes lucid and sometimes obscure--are not wanting and we shall examine some of these in an effort to reconstruct Wordsworth's theory of imagery and symbolism.

The 1798 "Advertisement" to Lyrical Ballads was a first step towards the formulation of a Wordsworthian theory of poetry. The modifications to his announced intention to experiment with "the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society"¹ for poetic purposes are well-known and will not be pursued here. But the defensive 'note' which Wordsworth felt compelled to attach to The Thorn (1800), makes it clear that he was by that date already under attack. The significance of the note, for our purpose, is that it contains statements which may be regarded as a beginning towards the articulation of a theory of imagery and symbolism. Apparently answering critics who had complained about unnecessary tautologies, Wordsworth reminds his readers that

words, a poet's words more particularly, ought to be weighed in the balance of feeling and not measured by the space which they occupy on paper. For the Reader cannot be too often reminded that Poetry is passion: it is the history or science of feelings; now every man must know that an attempt is rarely made to communicate impassioned feelings without something of an accompanying consciousness of the inadequateness² of our own powers, or the deficiencies of language.

In this statement Wordsworth is apparently rejecting the atomic theory of language which, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, led people to believe that each word 'named' one object. Because of this belief, Locke referred to all figurative uses of language as "perfect cheats" and Hume declared that poetic beauty was founded "on falsehood and fiction."³ Rejecting criticism which he probably felt was guided by this superficial and inadequate theory of language, Wordsworth goes further to assert that even

apparent
repetition and tautology are frequently beauties of the highest kind ... [because of] the interest which the mind attaches to words, not only as symbols of the passion, but as things, active and efficient, which are of themselves part of the passion.⁴

Thus Wordsworth is not only calling attention to the difficult problem of finding a suitable language with which to communicate poetic thought, but is also pointing to the fact that words are not mere labels and can, therefore, carry rich overtones of meaning.

But the richness of language calls for great discipline in its use. This point is central to Wordsworth's distinction between imagination and fancy. The imagination "produces impressive effects out of simple elements"; fancy on the other hand is "the power by which

pleasure and surprise are excited by sudden varieties of situation and by accumulated imagery."⁵ This distinction is particularly important to an understanding of Wordsworth's views on the effective use of figurative language in poetry. The imagination fuses separate elements into unity; the fancy links separate elements in a capricious and arbitrary manner without completely uniting them. This distinction was later enlarged upon and illustrated in the Preface to the Poems of 1815. This Preface is the nearest thing to a complete theory of imagery in Wordsworth's writings and therefore deserves some close scrutiny.

In the Preface Wordsworth names 'observation and description', 'sensibility', 'reflection', 'imagination and fancy' and 'invention' as 'powers' necessary in the production of poetry.⁶ His definition of these terms makes his first and third 'powers' (since the fourth seems largely a duplication of the third) particularly relevant to our purpose.

Wordsworth defines the powers of observation and description as

the ability to observe with accuracy things as they are in themselves, and with fidelity to describe them, unmodified by any passion or feeling existing in the mind of the Describer: whether the things depicted be actually present to the senses, or have a place only in the memory.⁷

He then goes on to remind the reader that while indispensable, this power has a limited value since the poet cannot use it for too long without giving the impression that 'the higher qualities' of his mind are passive, "and in a state of subjection to external objects."⁸

The material observed and described is transformed into poetry by the refining process of thought and reflection "which makes the poet acquainted with the value of action, images, thoughts and feelings; and assists the sensibility in perceiving their connection with each other."⁹ The point which Wordsworth is making here is that the poet should be able to see beyond the object, and his originality is measured by the degree to which he can communicate his thought to the reader. This point is well illustrated by remarking that his much admired description of external nature in Tintern Abbey (lines 76-83) is not of great poetic value because, in its details, it shows a youthful mind "at a time when images of nature supplied to it the place of thought,..."¹⁰ The fact which Wordsworth is pointing out here is that the passage relies too heavily on its power to evoke visual images without stimulating much thought.

This view was even more clearly expressed in a letter Wordsworth wrote to Wrangham in January 1816, apparently replying to adverse criticism of his poem, The White Doe of Rylstone:

Throughout [The White Doe], objects derive their influence, not from properties inherent in them, not from what they are actually in themselves, but from such as are bestowed upon them by the minds of those who are conversant with or affected by those objects. Thus the poetry, if there be any in the work, proceeds, as it ought to do, from the soul of man, communicating its creative energies to the images of the external world.¹¹

It is perhaps unfortunate that Wordsworth uses such an elusive word

as the 'soul' to describe the source of poetry. But his main point of emphasis is that poetry is much more than a faithful reproduction of the poet's physical world.

Having established this point, Wordsworth returns to a more careful examination of his distinction between imagination and fancy. Memory is involved in each of these 'faculties', but imagination "has no reference to images that are merely a faithful copy, existing in the mind, of absent external objects."¹² Imagination transforms the objects on which it operates. The examples which Wordsworth employs to demonstrate this transformation show that figurative use of language is at the heart of the process. But again he insists on the proper use of this kind of language. This point is clearly expressed in his condemnation of Cowper's lines

These valleys and rocks never heard,
Ne'er sighed at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a sabbath appeared

as an example of "vicious poetic diction."¹³ It is unlikely that Wordsworth is complaining about the vocabulary which is so simple. What he is condemning is the use of the 'pathetic fallacy' merely to heighten the effect of the lines. In contrast, we might look at Wordsworth's poem There was a Boy where he claims to have "represented a commutation and transfer of internal feelings, cooperating with external accidents to plant, for immortality, images of sound and sight, in the celestial soil of the Imagination."¹⁴ The technique of communication used in the two poems is similar. But in Words-

worth's poem, the boy's response to the solemn scene is appropriate, and it will be an oversimplification to suggest that it is an ordinary instance of the 'pathetic fallacy'. There is a harmony between thought and imagery, and it is this kind of harmony that is achieved by the imagination.

One of the examples used by Wordsworth to illustrate the power of the imagination to combine and modify seemingly unrelated objects is the extended simile in Resolution and Independence where the images of stone and sea-beast are brought together to suggest a new image that is more nearly representative of the old man's condition. Taken separately, the images of stone and sea-beast do not have much to convey. But with the power of the mind to 'confer', 'abstract' and 'modify', a new and more meaningful image is produced and made "to react upon the mind which hath performed the process, like a new existence."¹⁵ The imagination, however, is more than a unifying power. It is a creative faculty which makes rich new moulds out of the 'plastic', 'pliant' and 'indefinite' material on which alone it operates.

These are high claims for the imagination and, considering the sharp line which he draws between imagination and fancy, one feels inclined to agree with Coleridge that Wordsworth might have "mistaken the copresence of fancy with imagination for the operation of the latter singly."¹⁶ If, however, we examine Wordsworth's quotations and remarks more closely, it will be clear that behind the exagger-

ated claims for the imagination, there is the strong desire to call attention to the habit of mind which piles up images merely for their pictorial effect. It is also important to recall that in The Prelude Wordsworth tells how his poetic powers were stifled in his youth because of his tendency to borrow images and notions from books or work under the dominion of 'wilful fancy'.

From touch of this new Power
Nothing was safe: the Elder-tree that grew
Beside the well-known Charnel-house had then
A dismal look; the Yew-tree had its Ghost,
That took its station there for ornament:
Then common death was none, common mishap,
But matter for this humour everywhere,
The tragic super-tragic, else left short. *

(VIII, 525-32)

This passage, by its combination of parody and a random selection of images, becomes an image of the worst kind of eighteenth-century poetry which Wordsworth continually denounced in his essays. One of the worst faults of that poetry which the above lines may be said to exemplify is that it is written in an inflated language that calls attention to itself without a basis in the poet's experience.

One of Wordsworth's most perceptive comments on the imaginative use of language is to be found in his analysis of the lines he quotes from *Paradise Lost* (II, 636-43) beginning 'As when far off at Sea a Fleet descried/Hangs in the clouds', and ending in '...so seem'd/Far off the flying Fiend'. Here, Wordsworth observes, the whole complex of images revolves round the word hangs through whose force

* Unless otherwise stated, quotations from The Prelude are from the 1805 version,

the individual ships of the fleet are reduced to "one mighty person." The daring representation of the fleet 'as hanging in the clouds', instead of moving on the water, as we know it should, Wordsworth adds, is gratifying to the mind and in harmony with the "sublime object to which it is compared."¹⁷ The eight-line simile is an indivisible thought unit, enclosed by the 'As when...' and 'so seem'd...' of the opening and closing clauses. Here the poet's mind is working at full strength and when this happens, he sees his objects through and not with his eyes. In this way the poet transforms his experiences and perceptions into enduring works of art. Thus in contemplating the works of "mighty Poets", Wordsworth finds that in their poetry

a

Visionary Power
 Attends upon the motions of the winds
 Embodied in the mystery of words.
 There darkness makes abode, and all the host
 Of shadowy things do work their changes there,
 As in a mansion like their proper home;
 Even forms and substances are circumfused
 By that transparent veil with light divine;
 And through the turnings intricate of Verse,
 Present themselves as objects recognis'd
 In flashes, and with a glory scarce their own.
 (V, 619-29)

It is the poet's imagination which gives to forms and substances the 'light divine' and the 'glory'. When this is linked with the place Wordsworth gives to objective observation in the production of poetry, a clearer view of his theory of imagery emerges. This view is summarised by Josephine Miles when she writes:

Out of his double conviction, first, that images were important and the eye was an avenue to the heart, and second, that images were important to the degree that the heart, the universal human heart, gave them importance, Wordsworth gave to Imagination the wider meaning these combined convictions necessitated, namely, the power of human feeling and thought to abstract the significant from objects and images of objects.¹⁸

But because the poet has "more than usual organic sensibility,"¹⁹ he is beset by images which must be organised so that they can communicate the feeling of the poet to the reader. It is this higher sensibility which distinguishes the poet from the ordinary person. Thus, Wordsworth tells us in The Prelude that even as a child, a half hour's roam "Would leave behind a dance of images,/That shall break in upon his sleep for weeks" (VIII, 64-65). For a man who defines poetry as 'the science of feeling' and believes that it is through his images that the poet transmits his feelings to the reader, it is easy to understand the great emphasis Wordsworth frequently puts on careful thought and close observation. Even "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings"²⁰ is subject to the refining process of thought. It is thought which gives order and artistic form as well as meaning to the feelings which are themselves transformed by the poet's vision. This point is made explicit in the Preface to The Excursion where Wordsworth expresses the hope that his 'different course' might be apprehended by the public "if he shall succeed in conveying to the mind clear thoughts, lively images and strong feelings."²¹ These are the 'qualities' that make good poetry, and without them, even the use of simple and familiar language will not be enough to

hold the reader's attention. It is this fact which Wordsworth is illustrating with the following quotation from Dr. Johnson:

I put my hat upon my head
And walked into the Strand,
And there I met another man
Whose hat was in his hand.

The language is simple and clear; and yet, says Wordsworth, the stanza is "a fair example of the superlatively contemptible." Why? Because the matter expressed in it is trivial and commonplace:

it is neither interesting in itself nor can lead to anything interesting; the images neither originate in that sane state of feeling which arises out of thought, nor can excite thought or feeling in the Reader.²²

Here again Wordsworth's demand is clear. The poet must feel and have the capacity to transfer his feelings to his poetry--and through it to the reader--through proper choice and use of imagery. For while, in Wordsworth's view, poetry must start from the poet's perception of the physical world, it should, nevertheless, transcend that outer crust and reach the essence of things. This view is clearly expressed in The Prelude, when, after listing some of the sights that usually attract his attention, he adds:

But these, I fear,
Are falsely catalogued; things that are, are not,
As the mind answers to them, or the heart
Is prompt, or slow to feel.

(VII, 668-71, 1850)

This is an important admission by Wordsworth. Even the scenes of his mountain country which he considers vital to his development as a poet cannot become material for poetry without internal help.

For him, poetry is a combination of the natural and the spiritual:

Even in poetry it is the imaginative only, viz., that which is conversant with or turns upon infinity, that powerfully affects me. Perhaps I ought to explain: I mean to say that, unless in those passages where things are lost in each other, and limits vanish, and aspirations are raised, I read with something too much like indifference.²³

A statement like this introduces what many critics prefer to look upon as the mystical element in Wordsworth's poetry. It must be emphasised, however, that this mysticism is rooted in the senses and is exemplified at its best, perhaps, in the first two books of The Prelude where visual and auditory images frequently interact with an active universe to produce effects that transcend our ordinary senses. The poet's imagination can give value to the objects he describes especially if his work is inspired so that he can see that objects are interrelated. Such value can, however, be found only in poetry where the poet has tried to see things his own way rather than imitating others.

Thus it is the failure of the poets between Milton and Thompson to describe objects in an original way that leads to their condemnation by Wordsworth. With few exceptions, the poetry between Paradise Lost and The Seasons

does not contain a single new image of external nature; and scarcely presents a familiar one from which it can be inferred that the eye of the poet has been steadily fixed upon his object, much less that his feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination.²⁴

In like manner, the imagery in Ossian is "spurious" because of Mac-

pherson's failure to see the link between the various natural objects he describes. Macpherson's language, according to Wordsworth, is conventional and his images are imitative and decorative. His descriptions are therefore false because they are modelled after a pattern rather than rising out of his thoughts.

For Wordsworth, however, poetry and imagery through which it communicates the poet's feeling to the reader, must be true. A poet who is wholly guided by a tradition is likely to falsify his images as he strives to fit them into an existing pattern. If, however, the imagery is to have value, it must arise out of the poet's own observation and thought. Thus in his Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, Wordsworth states: "... I have at all times endeavoured to look steadily at my subject, consequently I hope it will be found that there is in these Poems little falsehood of description."²⁵ His objection to eighteenth-century epitaphs also centres on the fact that they are frequently written in an inflated language, using images that have no basis in experience. Much of this discussion is not relevant to our purpose. But there are two important observations which are worthy of note. Firstly, Wordsworth states, imagery should not be merely fanciful or decorative: "where poetic imagery does not elevate, deepen or refine the human passion, which it ought always to do or not to act at all,"²⁶ it must be dropped. The second point he makes is that

The writer must introduce the truth with such accompani-

ments as shall imply that he has mounted to the source of things, penetrated the dark cavern from which the river that murmurs in every one's ear has flowed from generation to generation.²⁷

In those two statements, Wordsworth is again emphasising the poet's responsibility to the public. All men possess some common knowledge; but the poet, with his 'higher sensibility', can create a large number of new images from this common knowledge for the enjoyment and elevation of the reader. In the process, however, the poet must constantly have his reader in mind and select the kind of language that will convey his ideas as he feels them. Language, which is the main vehicle of thought, can make or mar the poet's work. Wordsworth was fully aware of this fact and demands a similar awareness on the part of other writers:

Words are too awful an instrument for good and evil to be trifled with; they hold above all other external powers a dominion over thoughts. If words be not ... an incarnation of the thought, but only a clothing for it, then surely will they prove an ill gift²⁸

The highest poetry, in Wordsworth's view, is that which achieves harmony between thought and language. When the poet creates an artificial language, he may not only fail to carry the reader with him but may even repel him altogether. It is this belief which leads Wordsworth to adopt the homely and the prosaic, and to defend these elements even when he uses them in an unimaginative way. What is significant, however, is that Wordsworth insists on the poet seeing things his own way, and finding the right words to convey

his vision instead of carelessly borrowing images from the past.

This, in brief, is Wordsworth's account of the place of imagery in poetry. It is significant to note that his most elaborate discussion of the place of imagery in poetry occurs in his famous distinction between the fancy and the imagination. His constant linking of the functional and effective use of imagery with the working of the imagination, which he considers the noblest faculty, shows a thorough understanding of the problem. His perceptive, and sometimes exuberant analysis of lines of poetry, and the effect a single word can have in a given context, shows profound insights about the possible implications and suggestiveness of imagery.

But what of symbols? According to Florence Marsh, "Wordsworth's best images are symbols, but he advances no explicit theory of symbolism."²⁹ She concedes, however, that Wordsworth's discussion of the way common objects are transmuted does lead to a theory of symbolism. While it is true that Wordsworth does not discuss symbols in the explicit manner in which he treats images, the few remarks he devotes to the problem show a clear understanding of what is involved. Thus in the "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface", he finds an affinity between religion and poetry--religion "whose element is infinitude" and poetry which is "etherial and transcendent"--in that each is compelled to find substitutes, albeit inadequate substitutes, for their profound thoughts. He underlines the problem by noting that

The concerns of religion refer to indefinite objects, and are too weighty for the mind to support them without

relieving itself by resting a great part of the burthen upon words and symbols.³⁰

The remarks which follow this important observation make it clear that Wordsworth knew that circumlocution and substitution are important elements in a symbol. Thus, while his discussion of the literary symbol is brief, he has, nevertheless, seized on the central point which is that the symbol is the unit within which the poet seeks to accommodate a large idea.

How does all this relate to modern views on imagery and symbolism? The answer is that the modern view has developed directly out of the Romantic belief that imagery is at the core of the poem. Blake, Wordsworth and Coleridge held tenaciously to this view and expounded it with vigour until it was accepted by their contemporaries and successors. But these writers insist on an imaginative use of imagery, pointing out that while images are important, they are not an end in themselves. Coleridge, in his vigorous manner, sums up the Romantic view:

Images, however beautiful, ... do not themselves characterize the poet. They become proofs of original genius only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion, or when they have the effect of reducing multitude to unity³¹

With this statement and some of Wordsworth's statements quoted earlier, it will be easy to see how much modern views on imagery depend on the Romantics. Thus, after remarking that modern readers demand 'novelty' and 'audacity' in imagery, C.D. Lewis attempts to define the poetic image as

a more or less sensuous picture in words, to some degree metaphorical, with an undernote of some human emotion in its context, but also charged with and releasing into the reader a special poetic emotion or passion which--³²

and then gives up the attempt. Incomplete as it is made to appear, the definition echoes Wordsworth's views in an unmistakable manner.

Much the same thing is true if we take a few other samples of definitions and statements on imagery by modern writers and compare these with Wordsworth's use of the term image in The Prelude. The following examples, collected by Ray Frazer, will show some of the ambiguities that now attach to the word image. He writes:

Image is one of the most common--and ambiguous--terms in modern literary criticism. Brooks and Warren define it as "the representation in poetry of any sense experience." Another handbook defines it as "a mental picture evoked by the use of metaphors, similes and other figures of speech." In his new Art of Poetry, Hugh Kenner says that images are "what the words actually name"; an image is "a thing the writer names and introduces because its presence in the piece of writing will release and clarify meaning."³³

These definitions, as Frazer points out, isolate three elements in an image: the sensuous, the figurative and that which is meaningful beyond the denotation of the word or words which make the image. A few examples from Wordsworth's frequent use of the word image in The Prelude will show that he knew all these elements and more.

Thus, when he talks about his gifts as a poet and coins the word 'under-powers' as aids to his mind and then adds: "Nor am I naked in external things,/Forms, images," (I, 163-64), Wordsworth is making a conscious contrast between the intangible powers he has

already mentioned and the visible objects of the physical world. He also stresses the literal meaning by associating the words 'forms' and 'images'. This literal sense is also present in such usages as 'images of trees' (I, 423), 'wooden images' (III, 607), or 'a mind beset with images' (VI, 179-80). But in the last of these examples, there is already a slight shift from the purely visual picture to the mental image. And when Wordsworth says he is grieved, on reaching Mont Blanc, 'To have a soulless image on the eye/Which had usurp'd upon a living thought' (VI, 454-55), it is evident that he is talking about the visual picture which does not stimulate thought beyond itself. On the other hand the word 'image' is used in a purely figurative sense and becomes richly suggestive when, after the ascent on Snowdon, Wordsworth contemplates the magnificent scene and calls it 'The Perfect image of a mighty mind' (XIII, 69). Seen in its context, the statement bristles with meanings, leaving the reader to feel that no matter how much he may draw from it, there will always be something in it beyond the reach of words. He makes a similar, though perhaps less complex, use of the derivative word "imagery" when he writes of how

the visible scene
 Would enter unawares into his mind
 With all its solemn imagery, its rocks
 Its woods, and that uncertain Heaven, receiv'd
 Into the bosom of the steady Lake.
 (V, 409-13)

In the final clause of these lines, Wordsworth may also be suggesting the way in which the poetic mind should receive its imagery--as

an accurate reflection of the external object undisturbed by passion.

These examples, and Wordsworth's analysis of lines of poetry in his 1815 Preface make it abundantly clear that he had a notion of imagery which was as sophisticated as that of any modern critic. He knew that while poetry must describe nature with objectivity it could also make a word, a line or a stanza the pivot of meanings which the common observer is likely to miss. The nucleus of such meanings is the image. Thus, D.C. Lewis reminds us, poets and critics are remarkably united in their belief

that poetry's truth comes from the perception of a unity underlying and relating all phenomena, and that poetry's task is the perpetual discovery, through its imaging, metaphor-making faculty, of new relationships within this pattern, and the rediscovery and renovation of old ones.³⁴

For Wordsworth, it is the image which unites the sensuous and intellectual elements in the poet's vision of reality. This vision is one of unlimited possibilities, not only because of nature's infinite varieties, but also because of his belief that poetry can show "man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting qualities of nature."³⁵ Whether or not we accept Wordsworth's view, it is still true that he has depicted the bond between man and nature in a manner which enlarges our sympathy. With the image as his instrument, the poet reduces his vast and confused apprehension of the world--'the dance of images'--into small units from which the reader can see the orderly pattern that emerges out of the chaos.

But in studying Wordsworth, with his great emphasis on the uniqueness of each poet's vision of reality, one cannot rely too heavily on the traditional associations of certain images. Context seems more important, since passages selected for close comment come from a context, within which they form part of the total meaning. At the same time, however, the intellectual climate in which the poet lived must be given some attention.

In The Prelude, for example, we may be surprised by Wordsworth's claim that the 'proportions and relations' (VI, 145) of mathematics were for him not only a source of calm, but also

An image not unworthy of the one
Surpassing Eye, which out of space and time
Nor touched by welterings of passions, is
And hath the name of God.

(VI, 154-57)

It is important to remember, however, that this claim and the practice he shares with other Romantics, of postulating an animate universe, are merely

a poetic counterpart of the several theories of spirit as subtle matter current in the eighteenth century, Newton's "electric and elastic" active principle, Hartley's "infinitesimal elementary body."³⁶

It is against this background also, that we have to view Wordsworth's habit of reading meaning into the landscape whether as a manifestation of human feelings--'the still sad music of humanity'--or as an expression of the bond between man and nature--'the one life within us and abroad'. Such a practice from the man who vigorously condemns the indiscriminate use of personification in

eighteenth-century poetry has sometimes provoked hostile comment from critics.³⁷ But the use of the 'pathetic fallacy' in Romantic poetry generally, must be seen as the poet's special effort to extend human sympathy towards nature and to stress the sanctity of every life. If this seems too facile a view to some modern readers, one might point out that an artist's representation of a familiar landscape frequently includes a number of details that baffle the unartistic mind. The visible world is, for Wordsworth, the outer crust of a reality which his sensitive mind finds latent with ideas. These ideas he seeks to communicate, whether in the form of a huge cliff apparently moving after the young boatman, or in the serene grandeur of the Simplon Pass.

In presenting such experiences, Wordsworth sometimes moves from a literal description which emphasises the physical qualities of his object to a meditation which aims at suggesting the meaning the poet finds in the experience. This tendency is probably connected with the theory of poetry he expounds in the 1815 Preface where he speaks as if the poet's apprehension of reality is split between visual and intellectual halves. The result is that when he begins to intensify his language in order to suggest what the experience means to him, Wordsworth tends to use inflated images that leave the reader with a vague impression. But at his best, Wordsworth can stimulate profound thought within a short space, and use images with admirable freshness and originality.

But what is the difference between image and symbol? The experts agree that there is a difference, although they differ about how to distinguish between the two. Thus Wellek and Warren who tend to link image with metaphor find a difference mainly "in the recurrence and persistence of the 'symbol'." Then they add:

An image may be invoked once as a metaphor, but if it persistently recurs, both as presentation and representation, it becomes a symbol, may even become part of a symbolic (or mythic) system.³⁸

C.D. Lewis disagrees, and suggests a far-reaching difference. He writes: "An intensive image is the opposite of symbol. A symbol is denotative; it stands for one thing only, as the figure 1 represents one unit."³⁹ There is, of course, no such polarity between image and symbol as critical terms. Even if we accept his definition of an intensive image as one which holds 'the greatest possible significance into a small space', it will still be clear that he overstates the difference between image and symbol. Mr. Lewis has, in fact, adopted a simple, denotative meaning for the term symbol, disregarding the connotations it has acquired as a critical term.

The truth, probably, is that the two terms are complementary. This is the impression one gets from the more detailed studies of Northrop Frye, William Tindall and Philip Wheelwright. Wheelwright, for example, whose definition of the term is similar to that of Frye and Tindall understands

a symbol as that which means, or stands for something more than (not necessarily separate from) itself, which

invites consideration rather than overt action, and which characteristically (although perhaps not universally) involves an intention to communicate.⁴⁰

This definition, it seems to me, embodies the idea of the image as the unit which may contain the symbolic significance the poet wishes to convey.

I shall illustrate what I mean by briefly looking at Sohrab and Rustum as a symbolic structure. If we consider the beautiful description of the Oxus with which the poem opens and ends, we may at first feel that Arnold is stressing nature's indifference to human suffering. But as we contemplate the fearful events--the movement of the war emissaries; the confrontation of the two fierce combatants separated and hidden from the view of the opposing armies by the thickening mist over the sandy plain; the neighing of the horse as the reluctant but irate Rustum strikes the death blow on his only son; and the painful contrast between the beauty of the river and the ugly events on the plain--all these details combine together to suggest a conflict of cosmic proportions. The poem has many powerful or intensive images, as Mr. Lewis would call them. But the suggestiveness of each image is enormously increased by the total context which carries the symbolic significance of the episode. In Michael, Wordsworth uses a similar structure to great effect. The recurring image of the rock which we first encounter as just part of a list--'With a few sheep, with rocks and stones and kites' (line 11)--gathers great meaningfulness as it

turns up in several places and in various forms throughout the poem. From ^{the} literal stone that it is in its first appearance to that moving moment on the eve of Luke's departure when Michael recounts his sad story and orders his son to 'lay the cornerstone' (line 403) of the projected sheep-fold; and to the final point when Michael, numbed by the news of his son's failure in the city, returned repeatedly to the scene without being able to 'lift up a single stone' (line 466): the stone has become a rich emotional symbol suggesting at once ideas of barrenness, permanence and even death. Yet, as we contemplate the image of the stone, we realise that it holds a great deal more. This is what Wordsworth's poetry achieves at its best, and it is of little consequence whether in its rich meaningfulness the stone remains an image or becomes a symbol.

In the chapters which follow, I shall try to explicate some representative passages of The Prelude through an examination of its imagery and symbolism. Biographical details will not be forgotten, but these will be used only when they help to illuminate the poet's thought.

CHAPTER TWO

Natural Imagery (1)

Wind and Water

In Nature's presence stood, as I stand now,
A sensitive, and a creative soul.
(XI, 256-7)

The Prelude is primarily an account of Wordsworth's development as a poet. In that development, as he recounts it, there are, above all others, two factors which must unite for the best possible results: the poet's genius, dominated by the imagination, and the stimulation that comes from his contact with nature. In the best passages in The Prelude, Wordsworth frequently recaptures the great moments in his own imaginative response to natural objects or celebrates a childhood adventure that he considered important in his development as a poet. The poem therefore celebrates Wordsworth's creativity in the presence of nature. In following that subject, we also learn a great deal about other matters which influenced his development. His friendships, his education, his deep sympathy, and the anguish which his sensitive mind suffered in an age of profound change are all part of the subject. In this and the following chapters we shall try to recapture some of that story and Wordsworth's imaginative interpretation of his world by examining his imagery and symbolism.

I have decided to study the images of wind and water together not only because they are perhaps the most common in The Prelude, but also because they appear together a number of times and Words-

worth sometimes associated these images with poetic inspiration and creativity. Moreover, the poet frequently depicts himself in the conventional image of a traveller; but when he talks about his development as a poet, he seems to prefer to see the process as a mental voyage and actually calls himself a 'Mariner' (III,496). The choice is not, therefore, altogether arbitrary if we remember that a voyage of the late eighteenth century or early nineteenth century depended very much, for its success, on the harmony of wind and water.

Romantic poets, it has been widely observed, believed in an active universe.¹ Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats saw a world that is dynamic. In that vision, the wind which is a source of life, is often also a source of poetic inspiration. The wind renovates life and revives the human spirit. In The Prelude, for example, Wordsworth attributes his reviving spirits after his dreary and unproductive stay of some nine months in London to the action of a 'gentle breeze' although his freedom and feeling of exhilaration came, in fact, from the substantial legacy he had just inherited from his friend Calvert. Indeed, as Professor M.H. Abrams has pointed out, the Romantic poets replaced the traditional lyre of Apollo with the Eolian harp which produces its music through the action of the wind. The wind-harp is therefore "a persistent Romantic analogue of the poetic mind, the figurative mediator between outer motion and inner emotion."² Appropriately therefore, The Prelude opens with an

apostrophe to the wind:

Oh there is blessing in this gentle breeze
That blows from the green fields and from the clouds
And from the sky: it beats against my cheek,
And seems half-conscious of the joy it gives.
(I, 1-4)

But while the wind, that ancient symbol of inspiration, is clearly the dominant image in these opening lines, the cosmic perspective of the poet is also established by his linking of the gentle breeze with the green fields, the clouds and the sky. At the centre of these elements stands the poet Wordsworth, ready to sing of the greatness and beauty of nature. Professor Abrams claims that throughout The Prelude

the recurrent wind serves unobtrusively as a leitmotif, representing the chief theme of continuity and interchange between outer motions and the interior life and powers, and providing the poem with a principle of organization beyond chronology.³

This is only partially true. There are, at least, two other elements which contribute to the timelessness of The Prelude: water and landscape, especially mountains and their associated landforms. It seems significant to me that while rejoicing over his newly acquired freedom and the pleasant breeze which blows over him beyond the limits of the city which he regarded as a prison, Wordsworth finds it necessary to ask:

In what Vale.
Shall be my harbour? Underneath what grove
Shall I take up my home, and what sweet stream
Shall with its murmur lull me to my rest?
(I, 11-14)

The answer he gives is very instructive: 'the earth is all before me' (I, 15), he says, thus making it clear that his view is one which embraces the whole universe. At the same time, the lines suggest the link in Wordsworth's mind, between poetry, the wind and the murmuring of flowing water. But whether as symbols of inspiration or of the "spontaneous overflow" of his verse, these elements are inseparably bound up with the poet's larger perspective through which, he says, "the earth/And common face of Nature spake to me/Rememberable things" (I, 614-16). While his reference to the common face of nature directs attention to the plain meaning of the word earth, the larger meaning which the use of the word at the beginning of the statement suggests, remains with the reader. In other words, Wordsworth's stream of consciousness flows with poetic numbers under the inspiration of the wind blowing over the face of the earth.

It is clear from the opening lines of The Prelude that while the wind is a symbol of revival in nature, it is also the force which inspires the poet. With his newly-won freedom, the poet assures himself that he may now "quit the tiresome sea" (I, 35) and find an abode on shore wherein

To drink wild water, and to pluck green herbs,
And gather fruits fresh from their native bough.
(I, 37-38)

These images are not quite clear. Is 'the tiresome sea' a reference to the vast city where Wordsworth lay "immured" (I, 8) for so long but from which he is now escaping? His references to the sea are

generally pleasant, even if it does sometimes drown a man for whom the poet's natural sympathy is aroused. But the other two lines quoted above obviously refer to a poetic harvest in the manner of Milton who, in his invocation to the Muse in Lycidas declares, among other things: "I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude." (line 3). 'Crude', in fact, means unripe, and refers to the poet's feeling of unpreparedness for the task he was invited to perform. Wordsworth, however, felt no such inadequacy. In his freedom and happiness, a touch of inspiration from "the sweet breath of Heaven" (I, 41) was enough to stimulate his creative power within. He is quite explicit on this point, saying that with the sweet breath of heaven blowing over his body, he

felt within
 A corresponding mild creative breeze,
 A vital breeze which travell'd gently on
 O'er things which it had made,
 'Tis a power
 That does not come unrecogniz'd, a storm
 Which breaking up a long-continued frost
 Brings with it vernal promise,... [and]
 The holy life of music and of verse.
 (I, 42-54)

The frost, with its chilling and deadly effect on life, is broken up by the wind, the symbol of rebirth in nature. But in referring to the holy life of verse, Wordsworth introduces his hieratic view of the poet, thus linking poetic inspiration with the inspiration of religious prophets. This returns the image to its traditional associations. But in Book II, as the poet reflects on his unique power to perceive the manifold distinctions "in things, where

to the common eye,/No difference is" (II, 319-20), he attributes the possession of his great gift to his communion with nature, especially to his lonely walks

In storm and tempest, or in starlight nights
Beneath the quiet Heavens; and, at that time,
Have felt whate'er there is of power in sound
To breathe an elevated mood, by form
Or image unprofaned; and I would stand,
Beneath some rock, listening to sounds that are
The ghostly language of the ancient earth,
Or make their dim abode in distant winds.
(II, 322-29)

The experience thus becomes a cleansing process, a baptism in rain and wind. The ghostly language of this scene is, we recall, part of the "rememberable things" which "the earth/And common face of Nature" (I, 614-16) spoke to Wordsworth. The unpleasant and rather frightening sounds of a blowing storm, a tempest and even "The ghostly language of the ancient earth" are carried or contained by the wind. What is perhaps strange is that far from frightening Wordsworth, these sounds give him an idea of the sublime in nature. He was particularly sensitive to visual and auditory images which often affected him in a profound manner. But, as Legouis has rightly pointed out,

Even in nature the sounds preferred by Wordsworth were preferred, not on account of their sweetness or their melody, but because of their meaning, their striking peculiarity, the emblem he discerned in them, or the spiritual state which they occasioned.⁴

Particularly important in this regard are the sounds from a vast landscape: a mountain top, a forest or a large water surface. In-

deed, in Book XI, the poet seems to admit that these elements had a stimulating effect on his imagination.

Oh! soul of Nature, excellent and fair,
 That didst rejoice with me, with whom I too
 Rejoiced, through early youth before the winds
 And powerful waters, and in lights and shades
 That march'd and countermarch'd about the hills
 In glorious apparition, now all eye
 And now all ear; but ever with the heart
 Employ'd, and the majestic intellect,
 Oh! Soul of Nature! that dost overflow
 With passion and with life

(XI, 138-47)

For although he goes further to lament the dominion of his eye--that "most despotic of our senses"(XI, 174), which in his early poetry had mastery over his heart--and ear over his imagination, it is evident from The Prelude that visual and auditory images were always a tremendous stimulus to Wordsworth's imagination. The examples are many, but it is enough to refer to such famous instances as the vision on Mount Snowdon with its evocation of the poet's sublime feelings or the young Wordsworth hanging over a raven's nest with "the loud dry wind" (I, 348) blowing through his ears until the whole view before him assumes a moving but indescribable aspect.

On a number of occasions, however, Wordsworth returns to a more direct use of the animating wind as an analogue for poetic inspiration. As he made his way back into the country, Wordsworth claims, he felt a renewal of strength and a return of "Eolian visitations" (I, 104), although his poetic powers quickly deserted

him again. And at Cambridge where his "imagination slept" (III, 260), he remained conscious, nevertheless "of the Life/Of the great whole" (III, 130-31). At the same time, Wordsworth remained sensitive to the transitory aspects of nature, on whose face he says,

I was as wakeful, even, as waters are,
To the sky's motion; in a kindred sense
Of passion was obedient as a lute
That waits upon the touches of the wind.
(III, 135-38)

Here then the poet's sensitivity to his environment is likened to the flow of water, which is a continuous process. The imagination which in Wordsworth is an active power, can 'sleep' if its possessor finds himself in an unstimulating environment. For the poet, however, the other faculties must remain wakeful so that when the indispensable help of the imagination resumes the lute 'that has been waiting upon the touches of the wind' can reverberate with the sweet and profound melody of verse. Professor Lindenberger has made a perceptive comment on the appropriateness of wind and water as figurative expressions for the workings of the poetic mind, especially the mind of Wordsworth. Wind and water, he remarks, are

images which by their very nature--their flowing, transforming quality, their ability to interact with other natural elements, and also their traditional associations --allow the poet free range between the observable world and the higher transcendental reality which he wishes to make visible to us. Their chief function, one might say, is to act as intermediaries between the two worlds.⁵

In The Prelude, wind and water symbols seem to mediate between the poet and his world in the manner Professor Lindenberger

suggests above. Thus the unproductive days of Wordsworth at Cambridge are symbolised by the garden brook in Dame Tyson's home where the poet had to spend his holidays because of the death of his father. For all his joy over his renewed contact with nature, this garden brook has become an

unruly Child of mountain birth,
The froward Brook, which soon as he was box'd
Within our Garden, found himself at once,
As if by trick insidious and unkind,
Stripp'd of his voice, and left to dimple down
Without an effort and without a Will....
(IV, 39-44)

Thus the joy he felt was no more than a ripple in this "froward Brook" and the silent river has become an emblem of the "sleeping imagination" he had already referred to in Book III. It is important to note, in this connection, that in a poem lamenting the estrangement between Wordsworth and Coleridge, Wordsworth uses much the same kind of metaphors to refer to the break in communication between the two poets. The poem, entitled A Complaint⁶, was written in 1806 and opens as follows:

There is a change--and I am poor;
Your love hath been, nor long ago
A fountain at my fond heart's door,
Whose only business was to flow:
And flow it did.... (Lines 1-5)

But in the situation now prevailing between the two poets, the ever-flowing river of 'living love' has been replaced by "A comfortless and hidden well" (line 12). A well, however, even a deep and perennial well, Wordsworth suggests, is not of much value, especially

"if the waters sleep/In silence and obscurity" (lines 15-16). Obviously, Wordsworth is referring to the mutual flow of affection, sympathy as well as poetic thought. With the cooling in their friendship, the flowing river becomes the still water of a narrow well which becomes useless when the "waters sleep."

In an interesting passage in Book IV of The Prelude, Wordsworth uses nature to depict his own mood of deep contemplation. He was alone on a road when he began to reflect on the power of nature to restore our calm, and soon sat under a wood to continue his meditation.

meanwhile
 The mountain heights were slowly overspread
 With darkness, and before a rippling breeze
 The long Lake lengthen'd out its hoary line;
 And in the shelter'd coppice where I sate,
 Around me, from among the hazel leaves,
 Now here, now there, stirr'd by the straggling wind,
 Came intermittingly a breath-like sound,
 A respiration short and quick, . . .
 (IV, 168-76)

In the vivid picture of the rippling breeze activating the lake into the graceful movement suggested by the alliteration of the third line, the poet is probably also symbolizing the gentle but continuous flow of his own thought.

In A Complaint and the two passages just quoted from The Prelude therefore, Wordsworth is using the technique of representing the mind's internal situation through the analogy of an external object in nature. This technique is common to most of the Romantics but it is one which Wordsworth and Coleridge use with particularly

telling effect. We are all familiar with the moments when our power for creative thought seems to desert us. To the poet this is a particularly agonizing experience and with the decline in poetic powers which followed the golden decade of creativity in Wordsworth, it is easy to recognise the force of the truth which he has represented in the metaphors of the above passages, especially the vivid ones in A Complaint. Water imagery is particularly apposite as an analogue for the working of the subconscious mind in relation to the human body which houses it. As Elizabeth Sewall puts it,

The mind flows through the caverns of the body. It is diffused through the body as water on its tables and channels and veins is diffused through the earth.⁷

But there is another sense in which Wordsworth's use of the image is appropriate. By combining the metaphors of sleep and frozen water (implied in his use of the word "thaws" in IV, 157), he suggests a state of temporary inactivity which will disappear with waking or thawing. The applicability of these metaphors to Wordsworth's creative life is evident if we recall that flashes of his original genius came to him intermittently throughout his life and gave birth to some of his best lines of poetry. The occasional thaw in poetic powers is one which, in the context of The Prelude, comes with the return of 'the mild, creative air' or the 'animating breeze'.

In its direct application to poetry therefore, the wind is primarily a symbol of inspiration and renovation. But as the examples already quoted amply show, Wordsworth's use of this symbol

varies widely and we can further see his versatility by looking at a few other examples.

Thus Book VII opens by recalling the "animating breeze" (VII, 2) that had generated his "Dythyrambic fervour" (VII, 5) as he made his way out of the city at the beginning of the poem. But some twenty lines below, Wordsworth is standing lost in thought as "a quire of Redbreasts" (VII, 24) sings, blending its sweet music with the "bleak winds" (VII, 36) of winter to release his creative power. When night overtakes him in this moment of illumination his feelings are stirred in the silent night and the unexpected appearance of a light-bearing glow-worm becomes an emblem of the poet's inner light so that "the whole year seem'd tenderness and love" (VII, 48). The darkness, the silence, the sudden appearance of light are a prelude in miniature to that climactic moment on Snowdon when the same elements combine to symbolize the mental and spiritual illumination of the poet. This analysis seems to be borne out by Wordsworth's comment on the episode.

The last Night's genial feeling overflow'd
Upon this morning and my favourite grove,
Now tossing its dark boughs in sun and wind
Spreads through me a commotion like its own,
Something that fits me for the Poet's task.
(VII, 49-53)

The wind which first gave birth to Wordsworth's genial feeling now works with the greater light of the sun to keep alive the rout of feelings from which the poet draws his material. We may also recall that in Book V, while talking about the power of the poet's

words to transform objects, Wordsworth immediately links this ability to a "Visionary Power" (V, 619) that

Attends upon the motions of the winds
Embodied in the mystery of words.
(V, 620-21)

The wind is not, however, always a benign, inspiring or restorative agent. Its appearance is noticeably less frequent in the discussion of Wordsworth's experiences in London and the French Revolution. In the latter case especially, it frequently appears in one or other of its destructive forms, particularly that of the storm which we shall look at more closely in a later chapter. During the French Revolution the wind, in fact, becomes a symbol of emotional instability. Wordsworth talks of his conversations with revolutionary leaders

and the emotions wrought
Within our minds by the ever-varying wind
Of Record and Report which day by day
Swept over us. . . .
(IX, 546-49)

And in a vivid image reflecting the welter of turbulent feelings that replaced his inner calm as he watched the turn of events in the French Revolution, he laments his agony saying:

I, who with the breeze
Had play'd, a green leaf on the blessed tree
Of my beloved country; nor had wish'd
For happier fortune than to wither there,
Now from my pleasant station was cut off
And toss'd about in whirlwinds.
(X, 254-59)

The images of this passage seem quite appropriate for the ideas the poet wishes to communicate. Wordsworth in his country home is a green leaf, playing with the breeze; green, that restful colour which is also the symbol of life. In the dynamic relationship suggested by the image of the poet playing with the breeze, what can a poet like Wordsworth wish better than to have life run its normal course--to have the leaf blossom, wither or ripen and fall. But cut off from his home country, the poet finds himself caught in the whirlwinds of revolution and in the paradoxical situation of always moving but getting nowhere. There is also the further suggestion of giddiness and confusion which no doubt dominated the poet's mind at this period of life. And so the contrast between the productive life inspired by the breeze and the period of stagnation which is symbolized by the whirlwinds is thrown into bold relief.

In Book XI, there is another example of a common Romantic and particularly Wordsworthian practice of using nature to reflect human emotions. Wordsworth and his two brothers Richard and John were waiting for the horses that were to take them home for the Christmas holidays of December 1783, during which their father died.⁸ As the boys waited under wind and rain, the whole landscape assumed a bleak and desolate aspect, offering, as it were, a premonition of the loss and desolation that the boys were soon to experience. When their father died soon afterwards, Wordsworth submitted to his

fate with Christian resignation.

And afterwards, the wind and sleety rain
 And all the business of the elements,
 The single sheep, and the one blasted tree,
 And the bleak music of that old stone wall,
 The noise of wood and water, and the mist
 Which on the line of each of those two Roads
 Advanced in such indisputable shapes,
 All these were spectacles and sounds to which
 I often would repair and thence would drink,
 As at a fountain, . . .

(XI, 376-85)

Thus we have another instance of wind and water combining to chasten the poet. Another baptism in wind and water which on reflection, the poet found, led to submission to the will of his God--"I bow'd low/To God, who thus corrected my desires" (XI, 374-75). The rest of the images--the single sheep, the blasted tree and the bleak music coming through the chinks in the stone wall--are emblems of desolation objectifying the poet's inner feeling of loneliness in, and disharmony with, the world. Later Wordsworth returned to the scene to drink the cup of his sorrow--although deeper and larger feelings are suggested by the bold and original twist in the metaphor through the introduction of the word 'fountain'--in the same way as Michael continually returned to the unfinished sheepfold to mourn his loss and reflect on the broken covenant between him and his son.

All these examples testify to Wordsworth's great originality. A familiar or traditional image is made to sparkle bright with one imaginative stroke. The late Professor Garrod has remarked that the distinctive value of Wordsworth's poetry lies in its power to make us live imaginatively in a world of "custom and casual cares."

He brings to us, as no one else does, images and intuitions which light the common face of life, throwing into new, and truer relations the parts of that great, but confused order of things which is Nature.⁹

This is particularly true of Wordsworth's use of water imagery in The Prelude. We have already referred to a few examples, especially to the image of "sleeping waters" as a poetic analogue for cooling passions or the temporary cessation in the flow of creative power. And we have just looked at another metaphor derived from or related to water: that of the young Wordsworth drinking the cup of his sorrow. We may therefore move to a closer examination of water imagery in The Prelude by noting that in recalling

How Nature by extrinsic passion first
Peopled my mind with beauteous forms or grand,
And made me love them, . . .
(I, 572-74)

Wordsworth gives great prominence to the influence of water and uses water imagery to communicate that development. At the age of ten, Wordsworth recalls, the changes in the season left an indelible impression in his mind, and,

A Child, I held unconscious intercourse
With the eternal Beauty, drinking in
A pure organic pleasure from the lines
Of curling mist, or from the level plain
Of waters colour'd by the steady clouds.
(I, 589-93)

There is clearly a striking difference in the use of the word "drink" in this passage and the one on the poet's grief above. The idea of deep absorption is involved in each case but absorption in one's personal grief is a numbing and different experience from the pleasant

feeling of being mentally engrossed in the beauty of nature.

While the recurrent images in Wordsworth's poetry usually have various applications, water, like the wind, is frequently associated with the working of the mind. Thus in Book I, the poet refers to false starts in poetic creation as "Proud spring-tide swellings," mistaken "for a regular sea" (I, 178). Later, the poet is presented

As one who hangs down-bending from the side
Of a slow-moving Boat, upon the breast
Of a still water, solacing himself
With such discoveries as his eye can make,
Beneath him, in the bottom of the deeps,
Sees many beauteous sights, weeds, fishes, flowers,
Grots, pebbles, roots of trees, and fancies more;
Yet often is perplex'd and cannot part
The shadow from the substance, rocks and sky,
Mountains and clouds, from that which is indeed
The region, and the things which there abide
In their true dwelling....

(IV, 247-58)

Although it is obvious that the poet is describing an analogy for the introspective processes of his own mind, his perspective is clearly one of cosmic proportions. As the mind's eye flashes from the depths of the ocean to the sky above, the poet's vision is literally crowded by the "dance of images" that disturbed his sleep for weeks (VIII, 164-65). But as the lines further suggest, the poet must not only distinguish between essential and inessential, but must also differentiate between the mind which perceives and the things it perceives. The poet is an explorer sounding not only the depths of his mind, but also exploring the physical world.¹⁰ There

is, apparently, an implied comparison between the inscrutable working of the mind and the depths of the sea which, like the mind, accommodates many beautiful things among its myriads of living objects. For the poet, however, the "awakening sense impressions are not simply a dance of atoms, a series of camera shots of an alien world; they group themselves significantly."¹¹

It is important to note that on that great morning when Wordsworth felt the "call" to be a poet, water and light imagery dominate the scene.

Magnificent
 The morning was, in memorable pomp,
 More glorious than I ever had beheld.
 The Sea was laughing at a distance; all
 The solid Mountains were as bright as clouds,
 Grain-tinctured, drench'd in empyrean light;
 And, in the meadows and the lower grounds,
 Was all the sweetness of a common dawn,
 Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
 And Labourers going forth into the fields.
 (IV, 330-39)

And so on this memorable day of dedication, we have all the elements in which, Wordsworth's view, are essential to the poet. First is the poet's joy, reflected in the image of the laughing sea, an image which gains in significance when we contrast it with the image of 'sleeping waters' which we discussed above. Second, what for Wordsworth was the raw material for poetry--the mountains and the clouds, the meadows and the lower grounds, the mists and the singing of birds, the labourers and their fields--all of which are converted into poetry after being purified of their grosser elements. The

"empyrean light" which shines through the passage testifies to the tendency in Wordsworth to glide easily from the mundane to the transcendental.

But long before this moment of dedication, while the poet was still thinking of the kind of poetry he might write, and scolding himself for "unprofitably travelling towards the grave" (I, 269), he suddenly explodes into song praising the Derwent, "the fairest of all Rivers" (I, 272),

Which with its steady cadence, tempering
Our human waywardness, compos'd my thoughts
To more than infant softness, giving me,
Among the fretful dwellings of mankind,
A knowledge, a dim earnest, of the calm
That Nature breathes among the hills and groves.
(I, 280-85)

Wordsworth is saying quite frankly, if somewhat strangely, that it was the Derwent which, by blending its murmurs with his nurse's song, gave him the calm that was indispensable to the poet. It was also in the same river that Wordsworth sometimes bathed a whole day in summer. But it was not only sensuous pleasure that the poet had from his environment. Aesthetic pleasure was very much part of his experience, an experience which often came to him beside a water surface. Thus he recalls how, as a child in Westmoreland, he frequently went to the sea-front to see the rising moon reflected in the bays and

How I have stood, to fancies such as these,
Engrafted in the tenderness of thought,
A stranger, linking with the spectacle

No conscious memory of a kindred sight,
 And bringing with me no peculiar sense
 Of quietness or peace, yet I have stood,
 Even while mine eye has mov'd o'er three long leagues
 Of shining water, gathering, as it seem'd,
 Through every hair-breadth of that field of light,
 New pleasure, like a bee among the flowers.

(I, 599-608)

The sea has always been a provocative spectacle to many thinkers, and, to Wordsworth, its seeming endlessness probably evoked the idea of the "infinitude" he found so fascinating. The idea of the infinite seems, in fact, to be inherent in the passage. The vast spectacle is unaffected by memory on which, we know, Wordsworth relied almost entirely for his poetry. There is also the alliterative suggestion in 'three long leagues.' But the value of this aesthetic experience, for Wordsworth, is in the final simile--one of the few in The Prelude. The simile of the bee gathering new pleasure from the flowers was probably linked, in the poet's mind, with Swift's now famous observation on this pleasure which, by combining honey and wax offers two of the noblest gifts to man: sweetness and light.¹²

There are other examples of this aesthetic enjoyment of nature linked, sometimes, with an inner feeling of calm. There are many excursions to the sea, rivers and lakes in the first two books and "at Hawkshead the little lake of Esthwaite seems to have been the centre of poetic things"¹³ for Wordsworth. To that lake, he says,

My morning walks
 Were early; oft, before the hours of School
 I travell'd round our little Lake, five miles
 Of pleasant wandering, happy time!

(II, 348-51)

Wordsworth also tells how he and his brothers, returning from their half yearly holidays with larger purses, supplemented the "sabine fare" Dame Tyson supplied and made their way with their "rustic dinners" into

... the cool green ground,
Or in the woods, or near a river side,
Or by some shady fountain, while soft airs
Among the leaves were stirring, and the sun
Unfelt, shone sweetly round us in our joy.
(II, 94-98)

Except for the natural attraction which Wordsworth felt for water, this appears to be a straight-forward description of the joy he felt in the presence of nature. But this is followed by an account of a horse-ride to an old abbey situated in a valley where he and his brothers left their hired horses to graze,

... to more than inland peace
Left by the sea-wind passing overhead
(Though wind of roughest temper) trees and towers
May in that Valley oftentimes be seen,
Both silent and both motionless alike;
Such is the shelter that is there, and such
The safeguard for repose and quietness.
(II, 115-21)

And as Professor R.D. Havens has remarked about the whole episode, although his remarks are just as true of the lines above,

Here as often Wordsworth succeeds in fusing into a harmonious whole elements apparently so incongruous as the feeling of boyish glee and physical vigour, a poignant sense of natural beauty, and intimations of something more.¹⁴

In his account of the tour of the Alps, Wordsworth frequently combines aesthetic and symbolic elements in his descriptions of

the magnificent sights. For, as he reminds us, the narrative is an account of

the birth and growth
Of gentleness, simplicity, and truth,
And joyous loves that hallow innocent days
Of peace and self-command. Of Rivers, Fields
And Groves (VI, 271-75)

Consequently, a scene like that of Mont Blanc with its "soulless image on the eye" (VI, 454) is passed over lightly. But the Chamouny valley

With its dumb cataracts and streams of ice,
A motionless array of mighty waves,
Five rivers broad and vast, make rich amends,
And reconcil'd us to realities;
(VI, 458-61)

Here the sound, the sight and movement of water dominate the sense, making a suitable prelude for that magnificent description of the Simplon pass. With the interaction of sounding water and wind, moving clouds and light shooting through the darkness of the majestic forest in this pass,

Wordsworth seems to have seen the very face of nature, moving, as he says elsewhere in The Prelude, like a sea with danger and delight, with pleasure and pain, those two primary stimulants of life.¹⁵

The pass, it must be remembered, had been reached by Wordsworth and his friend Jones without realising it and when the poet discovered this, he felt a sudden upsurge of his imagination rising "Before the eye and progress of my song/Like an unfather'd vapour" (VI, 526-27). The incomparable description which follows almost immediately after Wordsworth's enthusiastic praise of the imagination must be quoted

at length.

The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decay'd,
The stationary blasts of water-falls,
And everywhere along the hollow rent
Winds thwarting winds, bewilder'd and forlorn,
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
The rocks that mutter'd close upon our ears,
Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
The unfetter'd clouds and regions of the Heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light
Were all like the workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first and last, and midst, and without end.
(VI, 556-72)

Here we have one of the best examples of Wordsworth's approach to nature. He recreates the vivid physical details for the reader and then moves directly to that "obscure sense/Of possible sublimity" (II, 336-37) to which his faculties frequently aspire. The result is that the whole passage bristles with life as winds, thwarted by winds, are bewildered and rocks mutter to human ears and crags speak. The "rememberable" language which the face of the earth spoke to Wordsworth is here in all its fullness. The ideas of the permanent and the transient are fused together with man the transient creature standing in the middle of permanent and awe-inspiring things like the mountains. In the excellent image of the 'woods decaying never to be decayed', only a little reflection is required to bring home the force of its truth: the individual trees decay but the wood is always there. All at once we recognise the ap-

plicability of this truth to man and so realise one of the paradoxes of this beautiful passage. Tumult and peace, darkness and light which we ordinarily see as opposites are united and reconciled by the poet's imagination. What a contrast with the unrelieved gloom and utter hopelessness of the Tennysonian world where man, surrounded by decaying woods, falls in his due season! And what a magnificent choice of symbols of eternity! Water and wind, the elements which begin and continue life are appropriately given prominence in the passage.

But even after passages like the one we have just considered, Wordsworth still feels the need to remind the reader that his account of the tour of the Alps is symbolic rather than merely descriptive, since the latter would give the impression that "the mind/Itself were nothing, [but] a mean pensioner/On outward forms" (VI, 666-68). In this tour, therefore, as indeed in all his excursions, Wordsworth reminds us that

... whate'er
I saw, or heard, or felt, was but a stream
That flow'd into a kindred stream, a gale
That help'd me forwards, did administer
To grandeur and to tenderness....
(VI, 672-76)

The images are somewhat mixed but they can be separated without distortion. As Professor MacLean has remarked, "in any incidental reference to the mind's action, water seems to suggest itself promptly to Wordsworth as a proper metaphor."¹⁶ And so, for Wordsworth, various experiences become tributaries of a larger poetic river to

which all the minor streams must empty themselves. The metaphor of the gale carrying the poet forward is not altogether inappropriate for a poet who portrays himself in the image of an explorer hanging by the side of a boat feeding his mind with the rich and varied imagery of the sea and the sky.

The continual linking of mind and water which we have been following throughout The Prelude is stated more explicitly as the poem progresses until, in the final book, the poet's metaphors begin to look more like direct statement. The question: Who can say

'This portion of the river of my mind
Came from yon fountain?'

(II, 214-15)

asked early in The Prelude remains unanswered till the end. But at the end of the poem, we are in no doubt that Wordsworth "finds in the brightness, solemnity, and serenity of the water 'The images of a poet's heart'"¹⁷. It seems also that he finds the image attractive because of the spontaneity of the flow of water as well as the possibility of that flow being blocked or diverted by accidents in nature. Thus he describes how sometimes during his evening walks

Some fair enchanting image in my mind
Rose up, full-form'd, like Venus from the sea

(IV, 104-05)

and the poet eagerly tried to retain it. On the other hand, Wordsworth's poverty as a young man was an obstruction until Calvert's legacy

clear'd a passage for me, and the stream
Flowed in the bent of Nature.

(XIII, 366-67)

Even more significant is the poet's reminder that the main theme of The Prelude is the noblest of all faculties, the imagination, which he equates with a river.

This faculty has been the moving soul
Of our long labour: we have traced the stream
From darkness, and the very place of birth
In its blind cavern, whence is faintly heard
The sound of waters; followed it to light
And open day, accompanied its course
Among the ways of Nature, afterwards
Lost sight of it bewilder'd and engulph'd
Then given it greeting, as it rose once more
With strength, reflecting in its solemn breast
The works of man and face of human life....

(XIII, 171-81)

And so we realise that we have been exploring the upper and lower reaches of a river, flowing, as it were, over a limestone country, disappearing beneath the surface and emerging again, sometimes unexpectedly. In this rather ordinary image, therefore, Wordsworth finds an emblem for the operation of his mind. But the choice is appropriate not only for the working of Wordsworth's mind but also, that of the creative mind generally. It is this point which Professor MacLean is emphasising when he remarks that

It would indeed seem obvious that there are enough qualities in the element of water to support all the suggestion Wordsworth would have it bear when we remember that here is something which has the power to move and sound; to freshen and make float; to wash and to cleanse; the power to reflect; to distort, to sparkle magically; the power to be free; and finally, the power to create that rhythm, which, however it comes into life, can moderate, soothe and give pleasure.¹⁸

After this brilliant observation, it seems strange that Professor MacLean finds it necessary to suggest that light would have been a less suitable symbol of the imagination because "it suggests the absence of a sensuous element, and it further seems to imply, as water does not, a distance from objects."¹⁹ Wordsworth does not, in fact, make the separation which this statement suggests. Indeed Wordsworth seems to be affected by darkness and by light, by silence and by sound, especially the sound of running water blending with the singing of birds; and in many passages where the poet is making a conscious connection between the flow of water and the operation of the mind, light is frequently very much in evidence. The famous passage on the Simplon pass and the climax of The Prelude on Mount Snowdon are two notable examples. A poet needs a great deal of light and as we shall see later, Wordsworth's landscape is often drenched with light. Indeed, as Mr. R.A. Foakes has rightly observed, for poets in general, but the Romantics especially,

The most universal image is that of light, a fit symbol of spiritual illumination, of the transcendental vision, of the work of the imagination, or of the ideal to which the poet aspires. It takes many forms, but the sun, moon and stars are especially prominent because of their associations with heaven, their nature as permanent sources of light In The Prelude, as elsewhere in Wordsworth's poetry, the sun and moon play their part²⁰

We may therefore close this discussion by quoting Wordsworth's description of the ascent on Mount Snowdon which the poet finds more of a spiritual than a physical ascent. The scene which the

poet metaphorically calls a "sea", thereby uniting height and depth, is illuminated by an unusually bright light "in single glory."

As one of the most widely discussed passages of The Prelude, I can do no more than quote the lines at length and leave them to haunt the mind. On reaching the top of Snowdon, Wordsworth says,

... a Light upon the turf
Fell like a flash: I looked about, and lo!
The Moon stood naked in the Heavens, at height
Immense above my head, and on the shore
I found myself of a huge sea of mist,
Which, meek and silent, rested at my feet:
A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
All over this still Ocean, and beyond,
Far, far beyond, the vapours shot themselves,
In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,
Into the Sea, the real Sea, that seem'd
To dwindle, and give up its majesty,
Usurp'd upon as far as sight could reach.
Meanwhile, the Moon look'd down upon this shew
In single glory, and we stood, the mist
Touching our very feet; and from the shore
At distance not the third part of a mile
Was a blue chasm; a fracture in the vapour,
A deep and gloomy breathing-place through which
Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
Innumerable, roaring with one voice.
The universal spectacle throughout
Was shaped for admiration and delight,
Grand in itself alone, but in that breach
Through which the homeless voice of waters rose,
That dark deep thoroughfare had Nature lodg'd
The Soul, the Imagination of the whole.
(XIII, 39-65)

This chapter does not by any means exhaust the wind and water imagery in The Prelude. Besides the fact that Wordsworth sometimes moves from a literal to a symbolic use of an image within a short space, some of the passages left out in this discussion are connected

with the flow or expression of emotion²¹ and will therefore be discussed in a later chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Natural Imagery (2)

Landscape and People

From nature doth emotion come, and moods
 Of calmness equally are nature's gift,
 This is her glory. . . .

(XII, 1-3)

One of the most important themes of The Prelude--perhaps its most important theme--is the beneficent action of nature on the human mind. From the beginning to the end of the poem, we are continually reminded of Wordsworth's devotion and commitment to nature. But almost invariably we are reminded that the main interest of the poet is in man with whom nature shares "an ennobling interchange/Of action from within and from without" (XII, 76-77). This idea of reciprocal benefit is repeated throughout the poem, although, by his emphasis, Wordsworth suggests that man is the chief and perhaps only beneficiary. Much of this beneficent influence comes from a landscape that is vast, dynamic and full of variety. As the poet travels over its surface, his receptive and inscrutable mind reacts with nature and, as Wordsworth puts it, "reconciles/Discordant elements, and makes them move/In one society" (I, 353-55).

This interchange between man and nature and its power to chasten the young is particularly important in the first two books where the poet's relationship to his environment is extremely intimate. Indeed his imagery suggests the deep natural bond between a plant and

the soil on which it grows.

Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
Fostered alike by beauty and by fear;
Much favour'd in my birthplace, and no less
In that beloved Vale to which, erelong,
I was transplanted.

(I, 305-9)

The introduction of fear as a foster agent in the process of natural growth suggested by the metaphor of seed-time may appear incongruous. But the kind of fear which he goes on to describe is one which is familiar to many inhabitants of forest or mountainous country. This fear, moreover, has to be distinguished, as Professor Havens has pointed out, from what Wordsworth "terms 'soul-debasing fear' (V, 451, 1850), --cowardice, dread of suffering, or the terror arising from extreme peril...." According to Professor Havens, Wordsworth's fear is related

to a milder emotion, akin to awe and a sense of the sublime, arresting, often frightening, and yet stimulating, as danger commonly is, and somehow exalting. This emotion was associated in his mind, with wild natural scenery....¹

The fear, judging by Wordsworth's examples and language, is probably not milder or less intense than the vulgar fear from which it differs. The difference seems to lie mainly in their ultimate effects on the subject. The fear to which a boy is exposed through his adventurous spirit and creaturely desires enhances his sympathy and refines his sensibility. The famous episodes of the first two books, some of which seem to stir such severely intense fear in the boy belong to the group of events which Wordsworth later describes as "spots of time" (XI, 258) and to which he unequivocally attributes a renovating and stabilising influence on his life.

The first of many similar episodes is the poet's account of bird-snaring. This particular episode, like many others of its kind, takes place at night with the moon and stars shining over his head, when, says Wordsworth,

Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
My anxious visitation, hurrying on,
Still hurrying, hurrying onward....
(I, 319-21)

with the irresistible flow of the rhythm and the repetitions suggesting a compulsive movement and the boy's avid desire. Thus impelled and overcome by desire, Wordsworth relates, another trapper's bird

Became my prey; and, when the deed was done
I heard among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of undistinguishable motion, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod.
(I, 328-32)

The heights on which the boy plies, the light-in-darkness, the total silence and the temporary isolation from society are, as we noted in the last chapter, elements which in combination, nearly always suggest nature's grandeur and sublimity to Wordsworth. The 'low breathings' and other sounds which seem to 'move' silently after the boy are apparently an objectification of his sense of guilt and offer one of the many examples of Wordsworth's extraordinary capacity for intense feeling. The numinous and, for most people, indistinguishable feelings of such a moment are made palpable by the interplay of silence, sound and 'movement'.

This memory, somewhat duplicated in the brief account of the

boy's hunt for bird's eggs is followed by the account of the ride in the 'stolen' boat. In spite of the different settings, the similarities between the two episodes are obvious enough. As in the birdsnaring episode, the boy's ~~unmistable~~ pleasure in his exploits, the sudden chance of a tempting 'adventure' and the air of inevitability which seems to surround each of these episodes are again very much in evidence. With the moon above and the lake shining "among the hoary mountains" (I, 384), the boy unties the boat, and,

... from the Shore
I push'd, and struck the oars and struck again
In **cadence**, and my little Boat mov'd on
Even like a Man who walks with stately step
Though bent on speed.

(I, 384-88)

The repetitions and irresistible rhythmic and physical movement of the earlier episode are reproduced in these lines. Then, as the boy continued to row the boat, "a huge cliff,/As if with voluntary power instinct,/Upreared its head" (I, 406-8). Once again nature administers its reproach to the boy's apparently innocuous aberrations. To Wordsworth however, these moments are of the greatest importance, and he follows each episode with his own comments to suggest their symbolic importance. Havens notably, and several other commentators tend to emphasise the terror of these experiences. But it must be noted that in each episode, the eerie feeling of terror is preceded by a moment of intense pleasure akin to what in Tintern Abbey Wordsworth describes as

The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements (73-4).

Almost invariably however, the crude elements of fear fade away,
leaving behind, as he says after the boat ride,

The passions that build up our human Soul,
Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man,
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature, purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
(I, 434-41)

This is quite explicit and goes far beyond the grudgingly conceded "somehow exalting" * feeling of such experiences. There are a number of instances where Wordsworth uses the word "minister" or its derivative "ministry" to refer to these experiences. And it is a ministry directed to the human soul and the 'religious' associations are further suggested by the use of the words "enduring", "purifying" and "sanctifying". The discipline comes, as we know from the episodes, not only from pain and fear, but also from pleasure and the sense of beauty in nature. The conflicting sensations of pain and fear, pleasure and beauty are resolved in Wordsworth to produce a state of mind that is calm, steady and responsive to the human condition.

In the skating episode (I, 452-89) which differs in some significant ways from the two episodes already considered, the boy is a member of a group, connected with society and located in time by

* See Havens as quoted above, p. 54.

the tolling of the village clock. But shod with steel and sounding horns and bellowing, the boys frolic against a background of hilly forests and bright stars above. In the immensity of this setting, the village and its tolling clock pale into insignificance. The cold ice sparkles as the skaters "hissed along" and the vast silence is filled with the uproar of the excited boys. But, Wordsworth adds, at the climactic moment, the echoing hills "Into the tumult sent an alien sound/Of melancholy" (I, 470-71), and the young poet separates himself from "the tumultuous throng,/To cut across the image of a star/That gleamed upon the ice" (I, 476-78), as though to have a share of its light. Soon after this, and as he continues in his enjoyment of nature, Wordsworth realises that he is at the centre of a living universe, apprehending "the timelessness of the earth's motion, and the motion that is time. So, inanimate object, beast [represented by the boy's dress and howling], man, the earth, the heavens, space, time"² are brought together by that

Invisible workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, and makes them move
In one society.

(I, 353-55)

These important experiences and intuitions were, however, only a preparation for the poet's journey through life. It seems significant that after summing up what he believes to be the value of his childhood intercourse with nature, Wordsworth calls attention at once to his metaphoric journey: "The road lies plain before me" (I, 668). The traveller operates, of course, on various planes. There

are the actual or literal journeys to Cambridge, the tour of the Alps and the mountains of Wales and the important visit to France. But, as Mr. Foakes has rightly remarked,

These are not simply literal accounts of travels, but mark a progress in time, in the development of the poet's imagination, and so interact with and pass into metaphors and similes of journeys.... So, for instance, in Book III, the description of the poet's arrival in Cambridge, and his roaming 'through the motley spectacle' (29ff) there, is set off against the account a little later of his escape from the city to walk alone in the fields (97ff); the experience of Cambridge taught him to know himself and his powers, and the literal journey passes into and fortifies a figurative journey.³

The figurative journey is particularly important because (as implied in some of the discussion in the last as well as the present chapter) Wordsworth uses landscape a great deal to project his thoughts.

Landscape was for him a vehicle of communication. Indeed most of the great events in The Prelude took place during a journey of one kind or another. The dedication to poetry, the encounter with the discharged Soldier, the great visions on the Simplon Pass and Mount Snowdon, the contact with Beaupuy and the news of Robespierre's death are cases in point. Significantly, it is while walking through the woods that the thought first came to him that he might leave behind him "some work of glory" (I, 85-6). With this thought, Wordsworth--even as travellers are wont to do--lay down to rest,

sooth'd by a sense of touch
From the warm ground, that balanced me, else lost
Entirely, seeing nought, nought hearing, save
When here and there, about the grove of Oaks
Where was my bed, an acorn from the trees
Fell audibly, and with a startling sound.
(I, 89-94)

So it is fair seed-time again. The poet's sympathy for the natural world has brought him literally into touch with the earth. Lying on the warm ground, Wordsworth seems to drink (to use one of his favourite words for these moments of engrossment) in the deep silence and to listen, as it were, to the 'rememberable' language which the earth spoke to him. The vast silence is shattered occasionally by a falling acorn which, in this case, seems to be a plain symbol for the poetic seed that would germinate into 'the work of glory.' After this intimation, Wordsworth says, "I journeyed towards the Vale that I had chosen" (I, 100).

In his portrayal of himself as traveller, Wordsworth gives great prominence to his walks, especially on public roads. Again, the overlapping of the literal and symbolic journey is common. The morning walks to Esthwaite lake to which we referred in the last chapter are a good example. On reflection Wordsworth transforms the visits into a pilgrimage, often leaving him with a feeling of "holy calm" (II, 367). Later the image of the traveller as a man in search of spiritual elevation becomes more explicit. Thus addressing Coleridge, Wordsworth says:

O Friend, for whom
I travel in these dim uncertain ways
Thou wilt assist me as a pilgrim gone
In quest of highest truth.

(XI, 390-93)

There is, however, another important side to these walks. In Book XII, for example, Wordsworth states that the walks were undertaken in

order to escape from the depression and mental stagnation of city life (XII, 120-26). They were therefore an escape into the quiet of nature which is always very stimulating to this poet. But as if to remove all doubts about his belief in the value of these walks, Wordsworth states:

I love a public road: few sights there are
That please me more; such object hath had power
O'er my imagination since the dawn
Of childhood, when its disappearing line,
Seen daily afar off,...
Was like a guide into eternity,
At least to things unknown and without bound.
(XII, 145-52)

Bateson, collecting evidence of bad treatment to the Wordsworth children at their Penrith home after the death of their parents, makes the rather strange suggestion that

The open road provided Wordsworth with an escape-route from Penrith. That is, I suppose, the psychological explanation of his Wanderlust. The escape was from human authority--in the embodiment of a bad-tempered draper in a drab little provincial town--to whatever was non-authoritarian, non-urban, non-human.

Psychology seems to have led Bateson to a strange conclusion. Wordsworth actually summarises the reasons for his lonely walks, saying that in solitary wanderings was

Where I could meditate in peace, and find
The knowledge which I love, and teach the sound
Of Poet's music to strange fields and groves,
Converse with men, where if we meet a face
We almost meet a friend....
(XII, 138-42)

This is clear enough not to need further comment. I realise, of course, that the reader has to guard against the 'intentional fallacy.' But

the poet's tenacious hold on the need for truth and sincerity in poetry and his habit of road-walking persisted for most of his life. The walks took him to the places and sights which his inner light transformed to some of the greatest nature poetry in English literature.

The journey to Cambridge took him from the mountains, lakes and valleys of his native country to the plains of Cambridge where, feeling the "first absence from those shapes sublime" (III, 102), Wordsworth's mental powers stagnated and,

Rotted as by a charm, my life became
A floating island, an amphibious thing,
Unsound, of spungy texture, yet withal,
Not wanting a fair face of water-weeds
And pleasant flowers.

(III, 339-43)

The strange assortment of images in these lines symbolize the mixed feelings of the poet towards Cambridge. The image of rotten powers express&a strong feeling of disgust for what was probably, at worst, a period of mental atrophy resulting from inadequate stimulation. An island is usually the voyager's haven, the place of rest and refreshment. But Wordsworth's 'floating island' is apparently on a purposeless drift and its 'spungy texture' suggests a lack in substance. The 'water-weeds' and 'pleasant flowers' are an inadequate compensation which probably fed the poet's eyes without nourishing his mind. The island is therefore not too inviting. But, as Wordsworth fully realised, his views on Cambridge, as in other matters, are the hindsight of later reflection and may not be entirely correct since, as human beings, "we see but darkly/

Even when we look behind us" (III, 492-93). Then, reverting to sea imagery, he reminds us that some of the rough seas and storms of the voyage of life can be a blessing in disguise, for,

If the Mariner,
When at reluctant distance he hath pass'd
Some fair enticing Island, did but know
What fate might have been his, could he have brought
His Bark to land upon the wished-for spot,
Good cause full often would he have to bless
The belt of churlish Surf that scared him thence,
Or haste of the inexorable wind.
(III, 496-503)

But a journey, whether by land or sea, involves contact with people at some stage, and the landscape over which Wordsworth travels is dotted by a few strange but fascinating people. However, the image of the traveller as a metaphor for the course of man's life in the world begins in childhood and, therefore, it is to the figure of the child that we must now direct attention.

In discussing Wordsworth's childhood experiences, we are, of course, talking about the image of the child, even if it is a particular child. But there are direct and general references to the figure of the child, especially as a symbol of creative intuition. It is important to note that the first overt reference to the child is preceded by two significant observations. Firstly, Wordsworth reminds us, it is futile to attempt to analyse the sources of the power of the mind (II, 208-15). Secondly, he praises Coleridge because he is not a slave

Of that false secondary power, by which,
In weakness, we create distinctions, then

Deem that our puny boundaries are things
Which we perceive, and not which we have made.
(II, 221-24)

At the end of his remarks, Wordsworth begins his apostrophe to the baby which, imbibing feeling from its mother's eyes develops a sensitive mind--sensitive as though animated by "an awakening breeze" (II, 245) so that he

Is prompt and watchful, eager to combine
In one appearance, all the elements
And parts of the same object, else detach'd
And loth to coalesce.
(II, 247-50)

The operations of the two minds are thus juxtaposed and contrasted. The adult mind operates analytically while the child gets an apprehension of reality that is intuitive, unified and whole. The first is the unpoetic while the second is the poetic mind which, by implication, becomes the mind of Coleridge. Coleridge's objections to the attribution of philosophical thought to the child (he was of course referring to the 'Intimations Ode') are well-known. In this instance, however, Wordsworth is using the child as a symbol and he is talking in particular about a mode of apprehension. The whole cluster of images is therefore important. The child's intuitive apprehension of reality is not without help from the rational feelings of the adult mind. His powers are developed through "the discipline of love" (II, 251), just as earlier we saw the development of the young Wordsworth through the discipline of fear. Through love, the child's "mind spreads, / Tenacious of the forms which it receives"

(II, 253-53). The verb "spreads" suggest dynamism as well as wide diffusion with the adjective "tenacious" suggesting that what the child's mind receives, it holds. This is the way, as Wordsworth clearly states, "the first/Poetic spirit of our human life" (II, 275-76) manifests itself. Even on a literal level, this appears to be an accurate description of the way the child's mind operates, since once it is capable of articulate speech its myth-making power and imaginative thought generally seem to be very substantial.

Later, referring to his childhood reading, Wordsworth mentions books--Arabian Nights' Tales, Romances and Legends--which are particularly stimulating to a child's wild imagination. But such books, he tells us, minister to an inner desire in man,

Dumb yearnings, hidden appetites are ours,
And they must have their food: Our childhood sits,
Our simple childhood sits upon a throne
That hath more power than all the elements.
(V, 530-33)

Yearning, appetite, food. After images of drinking, we now come to images of feeding and so to the nourishment of the child, probably in preparation for his 'work of glory.'

As the child grows older, his position as "an inmate of this active universe" (II, 266) becomes obvious. As he frolics about, his actions are countered by nature's reaction and man and nature find themselves in a relationship of give and take. Perhaps no other lines express the pleasant aspect of this relationship better than those in Book V where, responding to the boy's hootings, the owls

would shout
 Across the watry Vale, and shout again,
 Responsive to his call, with quivering peals,
 And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
 Redoubled and redoubled; concourse wild
 Of mirth and jocund din! And when it chanced
 That pauses of deep silence mock'd his skill,
 Then sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
 Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprize
 Has carried far into his heart the voice
 Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene
 Would enter unawares into his mind
 With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
 Its woods, and that uncertain Heaven, receiv'd
 Into the bosom of the steady Lake.

(V, 399-413)

As in the skating scene above, we have here a fusion of man, animal and landscape acting and reacting on each other. The pattern we saw in the descriptions of other childhood sports is present in all its external details. The repetitive character of the main action is suggested by the powerful rhythm of the verse and actual repetition of key words and phrases. Between the breaks and flow of the verse (which mark the break and flow in the action), silence is suddenly injected into the scene so that because of its sudden and strange intrusion, it becomes the whole focus of attention. The phenomenon is naturally fascinating although in this particular scene it is the grandeur and solemnity of a moment in time and space that are emphasised rather than the terror which almost invariably succeeded fascination in the earlier episodes. Then, at the climactic moment, man and nature seem to absorb the solemn grandeur of the scene, a process which De Quincey has described with eloquence. Commenting on the significance of the word "far", he writes:

This very expression, 'far', by which space and its infinities are attributed to the human heart, and to its capacities of re-echoing the sublimities of nature, has always struck me as with a flash of sublime revelation.⁵

But the process, as already suggested, is a mutual one, and its full force can be seen not in the single word 'far' but in the operation of the phrases "carried far into his heart" and "received into the bosom of the steady lake" which communicate the processes of interaction and deep penetration. For Wordsworth, this episode, whether or not a personal recollection, is one of the best symbolic expressions of

The gravitation and the filial bond
Of nature, that connect him with the world.
(II, 263-64)

There are suggestions indeed, that this bond, in the moments of inner illumination in the presence of nature, can be as close as that between mother and child. Two examples will suffice to illustrate this point. First, when Wordsworth finds the heap of clothes on the shores of Esthwaite Lake, he watches to see if a claimant would appear. But no one came and just as the truth of his find began to sink into his mind, "the calm Lake/Grew dark, with all the shadows on its breast" (V, 463-64). The second example occurs in Book XIII where the poet uses the image of the river as a metaphor for the operation of the mind.* Along its course the river sometimes disappears,

* See p. 49 of Ch. 2 above.

but it emerges later with renewed strength, "reflecting in its solemn breast/The works of man and face of human life (XIII, 180-81)--an image which recalls that of the baby sleeping "upon his Mother's breast" (II, 241) and being animated by the "passion" of the mother working "like an awakening breeze" (II, 245).

From the child's world of love and stimulating terror, of grandeur and sublimity, the traveller moves into the adult world which, though not less grand or sublime, is desolate and inhabited by some singular characters. Most of these strange characters are types rather than individuals and share many common features, although the enigmatic Arab-Quixote seems to belong to a different category. For this reason, it will not be necessary to discuss all of them in detail.

The landscape which they inhabit is animate. The breathlike sounds so common in Book I are also common in Book IV (an excellent example occurs in lines 168-80) although, the poet says, his interest now goes beyond nature and embraces man. In his words:

A freshness also found I at this time
In human Life, the life I mean of those
Whose occupations really I lov'd .
(IV, 181-83)

In The Prelude many of the people Wordsworth loved have no worthwhile occupation although, according to Professor David Perkins, the first of these, the discharged soldier, can prove

like the leech gatherer, Michael, and other characters who represent Wordsworth's hope for human nature, to have a

"demeanour calm", to come close to being "solemn and sublime."⁶

But before the encounter with the soldier, Wordsworth prepares the ground by claiming to have felt the "dawning, even as of another sense,/A human-heartedness" (IV, 224-25). He also loved things to which he had hitherto been indifferent and turned away from the "heartless chace/Of trivial pleasures" (IV, 304-5). Thus with the emphasis on the human heart, it is reasonable to suggest that the dedication to man precedes the dedication to poetry which follows immediately and which in turn precedes the encounter with the soldier. One of the most noticeable features of this episode is the sharp contrast between the scene which, with its "beauteous pictures now/Rose in harmonious imagery" (IV, 392-93) before the poet and the thin and insignificant spectre of a man that inhabits it. Then as he wandered along in the dead silence of the moonlight night Wordsworth saw the tall and ghastly figure, "stiff in his form, and upright, lank and lean" (IV, 407) and dressed in military uniform, and

... in his very dress appear'd
A desolation, a simplicity
That seem'd akin to solitude
(IV, 417-19)

As Bradley rightly remarks, Wordsworth is not describing a ghost, "but a ghost was never ghostlier than he."⁷

In spite of his physical resemblance to the leech-gatherer, however, the soldier is not, like the leech-gatherer and Michael, a symbol of hope for humanity. The soldier is hopeless and helpless, a

mere phantom of strength, an outcast of a callous and thankless society, an eloquent symbol of man's inhumanity to man. Significantly Wordsworth emphasises the pathos of his suffering, his dignity in the face of crushing adversity and his service to his country; and, equally significant, Wordsworth not only omits any reference to a cause for the dismissal, but even goes out of his way to suggest that there was none. For, as the soldier explains, he had served in the tropics, presumably for his country, then, returning home, "he had been dismissed" (IV, 448), scarcely ten days after landing on his home land. For Wordsworth, the soldier is a simple object of pity, one who arouses "a mingled sense/Of fear and sorrow" (IV, 420-21). The symbol of hope for man in this 'story' is the labourer who lives beyond the ambit of the village which is the symbol of the evil society that callously shuts its doors against a harmless but suffering member of their race. What then does the soldier represent, or is he without symbolic significance? He represents, it seems, that sublime and self-possessed dignity and a Christian resignation and acceptance of his fate that link him to the leech-gatherer and Michael without also making him the symbol of hope that these last two are. To Wordsworth's entreaty that he should leave the public roads and seek help, the soldier returns a simple answer: "My trust is in the God of Heaven" (IV, 494). But this is mere resignation, albeit Christian resignation, to adversity and therefore sets the soldier apart from the leech-gatherer and Michael whose fortitude and active

struggle against mighty odds are some of their main and enduring attractions. For all this, the soldier is readily accepted into the cottage of the labourer who, by offering sanctuary, succour and the security of a home, becomes the symbol of hope for suffering humanity.

This rather long examination of Wordsworth's encounter with the discharged soldier is deliberate and is intended to call attention to the wide-spread misreading of the episode, or at least the common tendency to put undue emphasis in the wrong place. Frequently, it is the soldier alone who steals the limelight while in a few cases Wordsworth himself becomes the focus of attention. Thus, Lindenberger, like Bradley before him, emphasises the "ghostly grandeur," the solitariness and the fact that the soldier's "identity seems swallowed up either by the poet's own or by that of the external universe."⁸ The labourer, on the other hand, is not even mentioned. But if we recall that Wordsworth's love of mankind in this period was directed particularly to men whose occupations he loved, it will be evident, perhaps, that the labourer and his cottage are at least as important as the soldier. Seen in this way, Wordsworth's decision to turn the soldier from the direction of his village towards the labourer's cottage becomes a symbolic action, a turning from inhumanity to humanity.

Almost without exception, critics have emphasised the isolation of Wordsworth's characters of whom the soldier, the blind beggar and the girl with the pitcher are notable examples in The Prelude. Pro-

fessor Lindenberger, to quote an extreme case, has suggested that even Dorothy, Coleridge and Beaupuy, the cherished companions of the poet's life, appear in the poetry as solitaries, and supports his thesis by remarking that

Michael Beaupuy, garrisoned among the Royalist officers at Blois was "of other mold,/A Patriot, thence rejected by the rest/And with an Oriental loathing spurn'd" (IX, 294-96); Dorothy is depicted communing only with nature; the most extensive passage on Coleridge pictures him in Sicily, "a lonely wanderer ... by pain/compell'd and sickness" (X, 984-85).⁹

Then after citing a few more examples, including those of Milton and Newton, Lindenberger dwells on Wordsworth as "the most important solitary of them all"¹⁰ and comes to the conclusion that

None of his [Wordsworth's] figures is allowed to remain independent in itself, but it must inevitably dissolve into, or stand as a symbol of, some other being: thus ... Dorothy becomes a part of the nature with which she communes (XI, 208-21), and the identification which the blind beggar displays becomes "a type/Or emblem, of the utmost that we know,/Both of ourselves and of the universe" (VII, 617-19).¹¹

The main defect of this kind of analysis is the failure, perhaps, to distinguish between the literal and the symbolic. The 'extensive' reference to Coleridge, for example, does not appear to have any symbolic import: it is a straightforward expression of concern for the health and well-being of a sick friend. Nor does Dorothy become a solitary when she goes out to commune with nature. Indeed Wordsworth's main concern in the section under review (XI, 121-223) is to point to the difference between his youthful and somewhat thoughtless fervour for nature and Dorothy's less fervent but more thoughtful ap-

proach to nature. In his own words, it was an insatiable "transport of the outward sense, /Not of the mind, vivid but not profound," that led him,

... greedy in the chace,
And roam'd from hill to hill, from rock to rock,
Still craving combinations of new forms,
New pleasure, wider empire for the sight,
Proud of its own endowments, and rejoiced
To lay the inner faculties asleep
(XI, 190-95)

The compulsive nature of Wordsworth's yearning after the picturesque is suggested by the repetitions and the use of the word "still" in its eighteenth-century sense of 'always', 'continuously'. In contrast, Dorothy, even as a young girl

conversed with things
In higher style, from Appetites like these
She, gentle Visitant, as well she might
Was wholly free.
(XI, 200-203)

It is true, of course, that Wordsworth himself praises the power of solitude in The Prelude. This is not, however, an anti-social separation of one/self from the anonymity of the crowd but a withdrawal of the individual into the privacy of his thoughts or the quiet of a lake side, a mountain-top or a lonely road for the sake of contemplation. As far as it applies to Wordsworth, solitude is the metaphysical isolation of the creative mind, expressed in that memorable image of Newton "Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone" (III, 63, 1850). His lines on the subject seem clear enough on this point.

When from our better selves we have too long
 Been parted by the hurrying world, and droop,
 Sick of its business, of its pleasures tired,
 How gracious, how benign, is Solitude;
 How potent a mere image of her sway;
 Most potent when impressed upon the mind
 With an appropriate human centre--

(IV, 354-60, 1850)

So mankind becomes the poet's centre of interest even in solitude,
 and it becomes evident as Mr. John Jones has pointed out, that

Wordsworth was not primarily concerned with solitude
 as physical ~~isolation~~. Solitude in this limited sense
 is not unimportant, but its significance lies in his
 use of it as the token of a peculiarly Wordsworthian
 seriousness, an outward sign of a state of mind cast-
 ing its shadow over a whole poem.¹²

With these facts in mind, we may look at one more example of
 Wordsworth's attitude to human suffering. This time the poet strays
 to the spot where a murderer had been hanged, one of the two epi-
 sodes which he selects to illustrate his 'theory' of the "spots of
 time," those great experiences of our childhood which, leaving
 their indelible marks on the mind also nourish it and sustain us
 through the turmoils of adult life. As in many of the great moments
 of his life, Wordsworth separates himself from his companion but in-
 stead of the usual ascent to an eminence, he descends this time into
 the desolate moorland and finds himself on the spot where the man
 had been hanged with the iron chains and the gibbet as ghastly
 reminders of the crude fact. Casually Wordsworth saw the man's name
 engraved on the sod. He leaves at once,

And, reascending the bare Common, saw
 A naked Pool that lay beneath the hills,

The Beacon on the summit, and more near,
 A Girl who bore a Pitcher on her head
 And seem'd with difficult steps to force her way
 Against the blowing wind....

(XI, 303-8)

The scene thus becomes the meeting point of life and death. The bald, desolate and dreary scene betokens death, so that the majesty of nature and the sublime mood of the poet before and after the contact with the soldier are totally absent here. The girl who represents life is shown as an intruder, and is repelled by a hostile wind. The wind which before now was one of the principal symbols of vitality and renovation has become a brute force tossing the girl as she moves with her pitcher. From the bare facts of this experience, Wordsworth hints at its symbolic significance not only by pointing to the monument which commemorates the barbaric past, but also by its hold on the superstitious present which makes the villagers clean the spot every year. The poet, by turning with indignant shock from the discovery of the past, seems to dissociate himself from that past, but he is tied to the present by his own apparently superstitious response to the sight. Although it was an ordinary sight, Wordsworth admits, yet

I should need
 Colours and words that are unknown to man
 To paint the visionary dreariness

(XI, 309-11)

which it brought on him. But the poet literally grew up with the sight, so that, he says,

Long afterwards, I roam'd about
 In daily presence of this very scene,
 Upon the naked pool and dreary crags,
 And on the melancholy Beacon, fell
 The spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam....
 (XI, 319-23)

Thus, some of the important images--the naked pool, the dreary aspect and the beacon--are reproduced. But "the beacon on the summit" (XI, 305) which symbolized the poet's spiritual illumination and so lifted him above the mere physical aspect of the scene has become a "melancholy beacon" (XI, 322) although it still glows with "youth's golden gleam" (XI, 323).

It is this kind of episode, therefore, that Wordsworth does not allow to remain at the literal level. It is also the mode of poetic communication which is typically Wordsworthian. Even the little circumstantial detail, such as the boy's age--"I was then not six years old" (XI, 280)--contributes to the total effect. Almost invariably, these great moments fuse into harmony the child's sense of wonder and the sensitive adult's insights. In recapturing these memorable episodes, Wordsworth employs a special idiom, as James R. Baird has pointed out, which is very much part of his symbolism, with the words flash and gleam frequently appearing to denote the poet's inner illumination. In Baird's words,

They represent what may be called spots of pure awareness internally illuminated in the dark complex of retained sensation upon which imagination works. They are symbols of the pure universal, emblems of the past and of the present grasp upon the true universality of that earlier sensed. In them the poet arrives at reality

in which mind is liberated, through the intermediate process of imagination, from all sensory dependences. They contain the true meaning of both past and present since in Wordsworth's method there can be no meaning without past.¹³

These then are some of the people and scenes which lie on Wordsworth's path. They are strange and dispossessed, solitary and often shrouded in the kind of mystery that tantalises the mind of the reader. But there is probably none more mysterious than the singular character of the Arab-Quixote whose duality conceals a baffling complexity. His identity eludes even the poet-dreamer, who thinks he is seeing the knight

Whose Tale Cervantes tells, yet not the Knight,
But was an Arab of the Desart, too;
Of these was neither, and was both at once.
(V, 124-26)

Even the setting of the story is different and bears only a superficial resemblance to the "visionary dreaminess" of the hanging scene. The dreamer is "in a rocky cave" (V, 57), a place of mystery and depth, and close to the sea. In his dream he sees himself in "an Arabian Waste, a Desart", [and]...sitting there in the wide wilderness,/Alone, upon the sands" (V, 71-4). Frightened by the vast and desolate wasteland, he is comforted by the sudden appearance of a Bedouin Arab riding on a dromedary.

A Lance he bore, and underneath one arm
A Stone; and, in the opposite hand, a Shell
Of a surpassing brightness. Much rejoic'd
The dreaming man that he should have a Guide
To lead him through the Desart; and ...
[the Arab] told him that the Stone,

To give it in the language of the Dream,
 Was Euclid's Elements; 'and this', said he,
 'This other,' pointing to the Shell, 'this Book
 Is something of more worth.'

(V, 79-90)

Thus we have, to use Auden's divisions,¹⁴ three pairs of symbols: the desert and the sea, the stone of abstract geometry and the shell of imagination, holding between them the vain hope of freeing the dreamer from the terror of his dream, and, finally, the double-natured Arab-Quixote hero.

What these pairs of symbols illustrate once again is that in Wordsworth, the recurrent images can stand for different and even conflicting things. Thus, water which, we saw earlier, could symbolize the flow of the imagination or affection, has become a potentially destructive force. The cave which before now has been associated with the depths of the imagination, has become "a rocky cave," and, in its context, a complex symbol, related to the desert and suggesting "an inevitable, and fearful isolation from any external medium through which the mind can be healthfully governed."¹⁵ Yet, it is the recess into which the dreamer retires for contemplation and thus is linked with both the stone of abstract thought and the shell of imagination, the resting-place where the creative impulse stirs. All these complexities harmonize with the elusive hero who, expected to be a guide, turns out to be a prophet of doom. The shell, the more valuable of his treasured possessions emits

A loud prophetic blast of harmony,
 An Ode, in passion utter'd, which foretold

Destruction to the Children of the Earth,
By deluge now at hand.

(V, 96-99)

So the dreamer's joy and hope are disappointed as the expected guide flees from him, occasionally turning an anxious look towards the dreamer, who pursues in a valiant but futile attempt to escape the flood. Looking back, the dreamer sees "a glittering light" (V, 129) which he is told is the deluge catching up with the fleeing men. Then, as the Arab-Quixote disappears over the desert, "With the fleet waters of the drowning world/In chase of him" (V, 136-37), the dreamer wakes in terror with the sea before him and the book from which he has been reading before still by his side.

The important question is: why did the Arab-Quixote fail in his bid to save his treasured possessions? Is Wordsworth pushing to their logical conclusion the prefatory remarks to the 'story' in which he insists that all the works of man, even "The consecrated works of Bard and Sage,/Sensuous or intellectual" (V, 41-42), even all "these must perish"? (V, 21).

Before hazarding an answer to these questions, it is essential to look back at the images of stone and shell. The poet calls them 'books', and makes it clear which of them is the more valuable. The stone, the poet says, is

The one that held acquaintance with the stars
And wedded man to man by purest bond
Of nature, undisturbed by space or time;
Th'other [i.e. the shell] that was a God, yea many Gods,
Had voices more than all the winds, and was

A joy, a consolation, and a hope.
(V, 104-9)

In referring to the stone of geometry then, Wordsworth adopts the marital metaphor which he employs in the preface to The Excursion to stress the interrelations between man and nature although, this time, the relationship is dispassionate. The shell of imagination which is linked to the passions is "a God, yea many Gods," and thus becomes part of the mythology of the human race. But, significantly, Wordsworth uses the past tense to refer to these invaluable human possessions, thereby suggesting that they perished in the flood with man their keeper. But is this the end, is this total extinction? This is one of the ambiguities of the parable, for we seem to have a parable in the Biblical manner.

The double-natured hero is, in his natural environment of the desert, Wordsworth reminds us, "a gentle dweller, ... craz'd"

By love and feeling and internal thought,
Protracted among endless solitudes; ...
And I have scarcely pitied him; have felt
A reverence for a Being thus employ'd
And thought that in the blind and awful lair
Of such a madness, reason did lie couch'd
(V, 144-52)

But if, as in the dream, the world is threatened with total destruction, Wordsworth adds, he would leave the task of looking after wives, children and virgin loves to other men, a task for which there will always be enough people. In the event of such a threat, then

... will I say,
In sober contemplation of the approach

Of such great overthrow, made manifest
 By certain evidence, that I, methinks,
 Could share that Maniac's anxiousness, could go
 Upon like errand.

(V, 156-61)

Such thoughts, Wordsworth adds, frequently crossed his mind when he held a volume of Shakespeare or Milton, the 'divine' poets, each of whose volumes he saw as a "poor earthly casket of immortal Verse" (V, 164).

With the metaphor of the 'earthly casket of immortal verse', we may return to the questions raised earlier. The hero's failure to save the stone and the shell then is essential to the symbolic structure of the parable. His valiant effort fails, but it dramatizes Wordsworth's position that, faced with inescapable destruction, our effort and our aim must be to preserve the things which eternally bind man to man. The madness which ignores the plight of a fellow creature in imminent danger of destruction, even the sacred duty of protecting one's family, conceals the awful truth that transient or personal gain must remain subordinate to the permanent and larger interest of the race. It must be noted, however, that Wordsworth is in no sense anti-social. He condemns, indeed, the hero's self-imposed isolation, although he shares his eager desire to save the symbols of eternal truth. But what of the paradoxical image of the earthly casket of immortal verse? It is the symbol, perhaps, of life-in-death, taking poetry, the more valuable of the Arab-Quixote's two great possessions, back to its primordial origin and putting it

securely beyond the reach of time. The implicit question in the parable is: what would you do if you were faced with the hero's choice? Save a man, or save the durable things that bind him to his fellow men and preserve hope for the future? The answer is not easy, as the hero's anguished look in the moment of decision testifies. Wordsworth's answer is that the choice must be made, and while giving what direction we can to a distressed fellow, we must do our larger duty to mankind. This is the right choice because, for Wordsworth, "an abiding destination is unknown even if it may exist: a lasting relationship is not possible nor even to be desired."¹⁶

The juxtaposition of sea and desert is part of the ambivalent character of the dream, and the effort to reconcile opposites which are manifested in the Arab-Quixote. The sea and the desert mark respectively, as Auden has pointed out, the beginning and end of life. Each represents a vast wilderness, but unlike the barren desert, the sea symbolizes

that state of barbaric vagueness and disorder out of which civilisation has emerged and into which, unless saved by the effort of gods and men, it is always liable to relapse.¹⁷

But why does Wordsworth choose an Arab-Quixote as the man to save civilisation from the destructive power of nature? Partly, it seems, because as the meeting point of East and West, he represents the finest in human civilisation; and being an Arab and a Don Quixote at once, he becomes the symbol of some of the greatest achievements

by man in the fields of mathematics and literature.

Geometry had a fascination for Wordsworth, because it is not, like poetry, "touched by welterings of passion" (VI, 156). It is therefore a necessary antidote to the confusing mass of images that haunt the poet's mind. He finds in its pure and abstract relations, he says, "enough to exalt, to cheer me and compose" (VI, 141). Geometry therefore becomes a symbol of escape from the flood of the imagination,¹⁸ not only for himself, but for all poets. His experience with mathematics, he says, was similar to that of the shipwrecked mariner who escaped the terror of his own thoughts by solving geometric problems on the beaches of the island. And as with the mariner

So was it with me then, and so will be
With Poets ever. Mighty is the charm
Of those abstractions to a mind beset
With images, and haunted by itself....
(VI, 177-80)

So to the vast number of recorded instances where the poet's calm is restored by drawing from the reserves of deep stable feeling which nature left in his mind, we have a new hope,

that by the study of geometry man can center himself in a pure, unchanging, and independent world where he will escape from his own passions.¹⁹

For Wordsworth, however, even such an idea is expressed through natural imagery, and the character of a stone, often separate and independent, and yet remaining an integral part of the earth, becomes a perfect symbol for geometry.

The poet's reverie in Book XII (320-53), though very much ignored by the critics, is similar to the dream of Book V. Like the dream this magnificent vision of the past is not directly derived from anything the poet had seen before. The vision is again apocalyptic, and is laid out on a vast desert landscape which in this instance, is clearly identified with the primitive past. The barbaric age is evoked through the interaction of the rough tumble of the verse and the gruesome physical details. Looking into the past, the poet

Saw multitudes of men, and here and there,
A single Briton in his wolf-skin vest
With shield and stone-axe, stride across the Wold;
The voice of spears was heard, the rattling spear
Shaken by arms of mighty bone, in strength
Long moulder'd of barbaric majesty.

(XII, 321-26)

Then, as the "midnight darkness" (XII, 328), which he invokes and which obliges by obliterating the terrible sight, intervenes, Wordsworth's inner light which always attends him on such occasions flashes, and now it is

The desert visible by dismal flames!
It is the sacrificial Altar, fed
With living men....

(XII, 330-32)

and as the cry of dying men fills the surrounding hillocks, he realises that "the pomp/Is for both worlds, the living and the dead" (335-36). As in the dream therefore, the poet moves from the past to the present, and, in this case, clearly identifies the one with the other. So the awesome and barbaric spectacle of the past has become the symbol of the present. Even the cosmic perspective which becomes

explicit later in the reverie seems to be implicit in the first frightening vision. Is there not a deliberate ambiguity in the word "wold" (which the poet capitalises) to suggest at once a vast landscape as well as the world? And is there not a suggestion in the use of the word 'mouldered' that the barbaric age might only have been absorbed into the earth to become a part of the natural order even as with the girl in A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal? Whatever the implications, Wordsworth clearly sees in the horrifyingly barbaric spectacle, with its clanking weapons and the agonizing cries of death, a fit symbol for his age. If this interpretation stands, then the 'reverie' becomes one of Wordsworth's most biting commentaries on his age. As with the shipwrecked mariner, the poet escapes the consequences of dwelling on his situation by diverting his mind with geometric problems--"lines, circles, mounts, a mystery of shapes" (XII, 340). Thus the poet was "gently charmed" (XII, 347), the vision transformed "and the waste/Was cheer'd with stillness and a pleasant sound" (XII, 352-53).

This reverie is Wordsworth's last great vision before the climax on Mount Snowdon. As with so many of the great moments in The Prelude, it occurs while the poet was on a lonely journey, in his own words, "a Traveller at that time/Upon the Plain of Sarum" (XII, 313-14). Travel throughout Wordsworth's spiritual and imaginative journey alternates between land and sea although, and in spite of the many walks, he seems to prefer the image of the voyager. Even at Cam-

bridge the poet is a 'mariner' (III, 496), and therefore he "could have wish'd/The river to have had an ampler range,/And freer pace" (III, 508-10). So Cambridge has affinities to the "barren sea" (XI, 55) which, we shall see in the next chapter, took Wordsworth to France. And as the poem approaches its climax the image of the voyager predominates, so that even the travellers' guide becomes the "tried pilot" (XIII, 15). Mr. Foakes has made an important observation by noting that the main principle of organisation in The Prelude is that of

a voyage in time and in space, ... and as on other long journeys, there are breaks, for refreshment, as it were, in a story or a piece of descriptive writing, for meditation on a particular prospect or theme, and for looking back to see the shape of what has gone before. All these may be relevant to the main thread of development, and the journey is still there to be continued after a pause.²⁰

The most important 'partner' in that journey is nature. Therefore after the traumatic experiences over the shoals and wastelands through which he had to travel, the poet always made his way back to the healthful spots of his youth, where

Nature's self, by human love
Assisted, through the weary labyrinth
Conducted me again to open day,
Revived the feelings of my earlier life...
(X, 922-25)

It is nature, therefore, in her grandest and most sublime forms, that symbolizes the end of the journey of the spirit and the imagination. On Snowdon, mountain and valley, wind and water, moon and sky are in their most glorious form when the poet reaches the top, as though to

signify his conquest of the elements. But it is the triumph not of might, but of love which is one of the main themes of The Prelude. Humble in the presence of these majestic elements, Wordsworth felt that

The Power which these
Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus
Thrusts forth upon the senses, is the express
Resemblance, in the fulness of its strength
Made visible, a genuine Counterpart
And Brother of the glorious faculty
Which higher minds bear with them as their own.
(XIII, 84-90)

Thus, Wordsworth ends with his belief in the brotherhood of man and nature.

If it seems strange that this chapter does not include a discussion of Dorothy or Coleridge, it is because these two are not, in my view, symbolic characters in the way that the discharged soldier or the Arab-Quixote are evidently symbolic. Other important people like Beaupuy and Robespierre belong to a different category and will be dealt with in the next chapter. It is true, of course, that Wordsworth frequently uses natural imagery especially when referring to Dorothy. But this is the idiom which comes naturally to him, and its use does not necessarily make Dorothy or Coleridge symbolic characters.

CHAPTER FOUR

Imagery and Mood

Wordsworth's varying moods have been widely recognised by the critics, although they differ widely in their emphasis. Coleridge, in his perceptive manner, saw a mind whose 'soil' was "a deep, rich, dark mould on a deep stratum of tenacious clay."¹ This is therefore a fertile soil in which plants flourish and remain alive for a long time. Wordsworth himself recognised two temperaments, although, instead of a dichotomy, he suggests a resolution which yields happiness:

Having two natures in me, joy the one
The other melancholy, and withal
A happy man

(X, 869-71)

Thus, after a happy childhood (with its occasional moments of pain and terror) Wordsworth moves into the dull life of Cambridge. The contrast between the buoyant and hopeful mood of the boy and the gloomy and repellent aspect of the landscape is sharp. Of himself, he says: "My spirit was up, my thoughts were full of hope" (III, 16). But the morning of the journey was "dreary" and on entering Cambridge, his eagerness to see the passing student in his gown dissipates as the uninviting character of the place unfolds itself.

The place, as we approach'd, seem'd more and more
To have an eddy's force, and suck'd us in
More eagerly at every step we took.

(III, 10-12)

The loss of identity which Wordsworth always seeks to escape, even among his fellow villagers, seems to have overtaken him. The powerful image of an eddy sucking up those who approach this university town suggests an irresistible force which swallows and whirls about all who enter its precincts.

In the University itself, Wordsworth watches his new surroundings with quiet amusement. He is fascinated by the crowds as he moves "through the motley spectacle" (III, 29) watching

Gowns grave or gaudy, Doctors, Students, Streets,
Lamps, Gateways, Flocks of Churches, Courts and Towers, . . .
(III, 30-31)

The poet's mildly derisive mood is unmistakable. The rambling list makes the 'grave gowns' look ridiculous and even the doctors are included in the list as a mere butt. Indeed hardly anyone is spared as the poet moves through the corridors, the classrooms and the kitchen where the students work with the industry of bees but fill the place with strident voices, with humming that is "less tuneable than bees" (III, 48), and "with shrill notes/Of sharp command and scolding intermix'd" (III, 49-50). The only serious note in this first part of the narrative comes when Wordsworth reflects on examinations, periods "when the Man was weigh'd/As in the balance" (III, 65-66). There is an undercurrent of disapproval in the image but the poet's principal objection is that these exercises generate conflicting passions and "small jealousies" (III, 68). The dominant image for Wordsworth's early impressions of Cambridge, however, is that of a

pageant or a badly organised theatrical display, which is nonetheless dazzling.

When the first glitter of the show was pass'd,
And the first dazzle of the taper light,
As if with a rebound my mind return'd
Into its former self.

(III, 94-97)

The image of the last two lines suggests strong feelings and a recoil from what he calls later the "empty noise/And superficial pastimes" (III, 211-12) of his university life.

The contrast which dominated Wordsworth's mind at Cambridge was that between the solemn and majestic sights of his native home and the flashy but meretricious scenes and displays of his new environment. The journey to Cambridge, he states, was his "first absence from those shapes sublime" (III, 102), a fact which he recalls with great nostalgia. Instead of the sweet sounds and solemnity at home, at Cambridge

Our eyes are cross'd by Butterflies, our ears
Hear chattering Popinjays; the inner heart
Is trivial, and the impresses without
Are of a gaudy region.

(III, 456-59)

The lines hardly call for commentary, as the imagery makes it plain that the 'butterflies' and the 'popinjays' are in fact the gay but empty people whose fine display of colour has no real value and whose talk is uninspiring because it is trivial. In this society people are concerned with

The surfaces of artificial life
And manners finely spun, the delicate race

Of colours, lurking, gleaming up and down
 Through that state arras woven with silk and gold:
 This wily interchange of snaky hues, . . .
 (III, 590-94)

But in these lines, Wordsworth's interest goes far beyond the glittering finery in which he dresses this society. It is easy to read these lines without noting the awful suggestions the poet has packed in the images of 'lurking', 'state arras' and 'snaky hues'. For all its resplendent colours, this is a society where people trade in deceit and duplicity, guile, plotting and counter plotting, ingratitude and even the deadly venom of a treacherous snake. The pungency of this withering attack lies in the suggestion that all these evils can occur amidst a display of great gaiety and colour.

It is not surprising, therefore, that when Wordsworth directs attention to his own situation, he seems certain of only his nostalgia for the past. In particular, it is the contrast between the past and the present that bothers him.

For I, bred up in Natures lap, was even
 As a spoil'd Child; and rambling like the wind
 As I had done in daily intercourse
 With those delicious rivers, solemn heights,
 And mountains; ranging like a fowl of the air,
 I was ill tutor'd for captivity,
 (III, 358-63)

So the poet's freedom in his home is the freedom of the air: complete and unfettered. By contrast, the large university town becomes a prison. The epithets he applies to his native landscape, for which he feels intense love, suggest passion and reverence at once.

At Cambridge, on the other hand, Wordsworth finds little that

is of real value. The result is that he is generally indifferent, except for the little happiness he feels at the sight of the many young students around him. Thus, after bemoaning the empty and uninspiring atmosphere of his university, he makes a concession not to its present, but its past glory. In spite of the period of indecision and impaired judgment,

This was a gladsome time. Could I behold,
 Who less insensible than sodden clay
 On a Sea River's bed at ebb of tide,
 Could have beheld with undelighted heart,
 So many happy Youths, so wide and fair
 A congregation in its budding-time
 Of health, and hope and beauty, . . .
(III, 217-23)

Wordsworth's joy in the happy, hopeful even if undirected life of the young students around him comes out in the last four lines of this quotation. But his attitude towards Cambridge is conveyed in the imagery of the second and third lines. The university was like the bed of a river at low tide. As we saw earlier, the flow of a river is in Wordsworth the flow of the imagination and when a tidal river ebbs, it takes with it all the rich life with which it travels back and forth. But even if a youth were as dense and as impermeable as the sodden clay on a river's bed, he could not remain uninspired by the thought of this university's past as a "garden of great intellects undisturb'd" (III, 267). And so the richness, the productivity and steady progress of the great past are made pleasingly redolent in this one line, leaving the reader to compare and contrast with the barrenness of the present. In this present, Wordsworth's

imagination "slept" (III, 260), and

Caverns there were within my mind, which sun
 Could never penetrate, yet did there not
 Want store of leafy arbours where the light
 Might enter in at will.

(III, 246-49)

There is a quiet touch of pathos in this reflection. The caverns of a fertile mind ready to bristle with life and ideas are rendered sterile, as it were, by being deprived of the healthful and life-giving light of the sun. Consequently, the emaciated Wordsworth turned to his daily fare of books

With sickly appetite, and when I went,
 At other times, in quest of my own food,
 I chaced not steadily the manly deer,
 But laid me down to any casual feast
 Of wild wood-honey; or, with truant eyes
 Unruly, peep'd about for vagrant fruit.

(III, 525-30)

Wordsworth's use of the images of nourishment, especially his use of the metaphors of eating and drinking to suggest the enrichment of mind and spirit we have already discussed above. Here, to use his own idiom, the emphasis is on a loss of appetite as a result of being fed with impoverished food, and turning, spiritless and languid, to better but still inadequate alternative nourishment of his own choice.

In this mood of dejection, the occasional shaft of humour appears as strange as the surprising image in which it is presented. Thus Wordsworth contrasts the frivolous and indifferent assortment of students in his day with those of the illustrious past

When all who dwelt within these famous Walls
 Led in abstemiousness a studious life,
 When, in forlorn and naked chambers coop'd
 And crowded, o'er their ponderous Books they sate
 Like caterpillars eating out their way
 In silence, or with keen devouring noise
 Not to be track'd or father'd.

(III, 461-67)

So with his wry sense of humour Wordsworth makes a thrust at his illustrious predecessors. The puritanical and hyper-serious students, 'cooped' and 'crowded' in their halls and eating silently into their books like caterpillars are not only amusing but even mildly ridiculous. Moreover, in the image of the students 'cooped' in "forlorn and naked chambers," Wordsworth is not only calling attention to a life of deprivation and self-mortification, but is also pointing to the seamy side of that life.

But Wordsworth's habit of extolling the virtues of life and education in the country and his depreciation of the education in the schools and universities of the city often make him appear anti-intellectual. Because of this, critics have either ignored or lightly passed over the poet's portrait of the child prodigy and his symbol of "the monster birth/Engender'd by these too industrious times" (V, 292-93). But the portrait is interesting not only because it shows Wordsworth in an unusual mood, ridiculing his monster with pungent irony, but also because in it he uses techniques that are rare in his poetry. It is a creature made out of incongruous and incompatible elements:

'tis a Child, no Child,
But a dwarf Man; in knowledge, virtue, skill;
In what he is not, and in what he is,
The noontide shadow of a man complete;
 ... with gifts he bubbles o'er
As generous as a fountain; selfishness
May not come near him, gluttony or pride;
The wandering Beggars propagate his name,
Dumb creatures find him tender as a Nun.
Yet deem him not for this a naked dish
Of goodness merely, he is garnish'd out.

(V, 294-306)

The skilful interplay of imagery and other literary devices leaves the reader tantalized. What Wordsworth presents with one hand he takes with the other as each of the first two parts of the portrait ends in a sharp climax that emphasises the emptiness. In the first part, the nothingness of the 'noontide shadow' is stressed by the force of the word 'complete'. In the second half, the image of the man bubbling over with the generosity of a fountain is undermined by the presentation, in the subjunctive, of all the other virtues that go with generosity. Then as we wonder whether or not his tenderness is real, the bubble is burst in the caustic irony of the last two lines with all the feeling thrown into that final phrase: 'he is garnish'd out.'

Wordsworth's humour is no less piquant, when he turns to the education of this singular creature:

... in learning and in books
He is a prodigy. His discourse moves slow,
Massy and ponderous as a prison door
Tremendously emboss'd with terms of art....
(V, 319-22)

Here Wordsworth uses with adroit skill the common Swiftian technique of destroying our illusions by offering the opposite of what he leads us to expect. The prodigy of learning becomes the prisoner of his own learning, encumbered by nothing more than the terms of his own learning. But there is more to come. This prodigy can "string" place-names "the whole world over, tight as beads of dew/ Upon a gossamer thread" (V, 336-37). The images are richly suggestive. The beads of dew which quickly evaporate point to the ephemeral nature of this learning and the gossamer thread symbolises the brittle refinement and the tenuous base on which everything rests. The final paradox comes just before Wordsworth exposes his reason for inserting the portrait. The 'generous' creature becomes greedier with every increase in his knowledge, while his bond with the earth is destroyed. Growing 'wiser' every day, he still thirsts after

Each little drop of wisdom as it falls
 Into the dimpling cistern of his heart;
 Meanwhile old Grandame Earth is grieved to find
 The playthings, which her love design'd for him
 Unthought of: in their woodland beds the flowers
 Weep, and the river sides are all forlorn.

(V, 344-49)

So instead of creating an ocean of wisdom, the increasing number of drops fall merely into a shrinking cistern. This inversion of imagery runs through the whole narrative, and in spite of the great skill with which Wordsworth executes his task, his rather inept sentimentality in this passage has barred many critics from appreciating its fine literary qualities.²

To reject the portrait on the grounds that it is false is beside the point. Wordsworth is presenting a satirical portrait, a very rare thing in his writing, and the hyperbolic distortions he uses are an essential part of every satirist's tools. Moreover, as De Selincourt has pointed out,³ Wordsworth probably saw in this amorphous and empty creature a fit symbol for the kind of person that the Lockean theory of education might produce. In any case, this boy lacks the sensitivity of that boy (with whom, by their juxtaposition, he is probably contrasted) whose hootings call forth the response of the owls.

When Wordsworth moves into London, his angry mood and his feeling of outrage are so strong that the few positive elements he observes seem even less significant than he wants them to appear. His sense of shock was probably greater because, in his village, he had nursed a romantic and naively simple vision of London as a place "of airy Palaces, and Gardens built/By Genii of Romance" (VII, 82-83). The opprobrious terms and the occasional shrieking that punctuate this part of The Prelude are due, in large measure, to the gaping disparity between the expectation and the reality.

His account of the approach to London is full of important little details. He was excited, he says, but he also went with "a simple look/Of childlike inquisition" (VIII, 682-83) and because he was busy finding "some inner meanings" (VIII, 685) to the things he saw, he did not give way to the "light mood" (VIII, 686) that was

prevalent. His indignant mood and the utter contempt he felt for the men around him and the things he saw are made manifest as he recalls how in the coach taking them to "the great city" (VIII, 693), he sat

With vulgar Men about me, vulgar forms
Of houses, pavement, streets, of men and things,
Mean shapes on every side:

(VIII, 695-97)

So, man's dignity to which nature lends some of its grandeur has now disappeared. But Wordsworth's vision, as usual, soon transcends these vulgar forms and, as he enters London, the whole 'weight' of the city's past history seems to descend upon him.

The very moment that I seem'd to know
The threshold now is overpass'd, Great God!
That aught external to the living mind
Should have such mighty sway! yet so it was
A weight of Ages did at once descend
Upon my heart; no thought embodied, no
Distinct remembrances; but weight and power,
Power growing with the weight:

(VIII, 699-706)

As Jonathan Bishop has rightly remarked, in the interaction of weight and power, power growing with weight, Wordsworth has found a strong image which "expresses a paradoxical release of inner force complementing the very pressures which inhibit it, as if suffering authorized strength."⁴ But within the city itself, Wordsworth finds himself, as he was at Cambridge, "debarr'd from Nature's living images" (VI, 313), with the result that the imagination slept,

even in the season of my youth:
For though I was most passionately moved

And yielded to the changes of the scene
 With most obsequious feeling, yet all this
 Pass'd not beyond the suburbs of the mind:
 (VII, 502-506)

So from the image of the mind as a landscape with caverns over which the currents of the imagination flow, we have (in the last line) the city as a metaphor for the mind. But this is a fleeting thought, even if it occurs in a mood of quiet reflection. For Wordsworth, a city is primarily a symbol either "of human nature walled within itself",⁵ or "of the deceptive 'outer' life which distracts him in his spiritual journey."⁶ Within the city therefore, it is mainly these aspects which attract his attention. The romantic idea of the city is demolished as soon as the traveller enters it and he is attracted, instead, by what is really a "Bedlam" (VII, 132) as he is confronted by

the quick dance
 Of colours, lights and forms, the Babel din,
 The endless stream of men, and moving things,
 From hour to hour the illimitable walk
 Still among streets with clouds and sky above,
 The wealth, the bustle and the eagerness,
 The glittering Chariots with their pamper'd steeds,
 Stalls, Barrows, Porters; midway in the street
 The Scavenger, who begs with hat in hand.
 (VII, 156-64)

This then is the reality: a 'bedlam', a 'babel', a thronging mass of men and things dressed in flashy colours racing with time and crowding each other out. But while men display their wealth and race along to find more, even as their pampered horses draw them in their gay chariots, the scavenger stands by the road side, a symbol

of man degraded by poverty in the midst of plenty. And yet, thrown into the hubbub, the reader is as likely to lose sight of him as his own society ignores him. But he is in fact related to the blind beggar who appears later in the book. The begging scavenger's hat in his hand is the counterpart of the blind beggar's label across his chest. The hat and the label set them apart. But just as this book of The Prelude

had begun with an array of images suggesting increase of light through darkness: the glow-worm, the hermit's taper [and] a tree's dark boughs tossing 'As if to make the strong wind visible',⁷

so Wordsworth's inner light sees through the beggar's blind gaze and the uncommunicative label that pretends to explain his past, "a type,"

Or emblem, of the utmost that we know,
Both of ourselves and of the universe; . . .
(VII, 618-19)

And part of what Wordsworth knows is that in a society where man's value is determined by his wealth and the colour of the finery in which he drapes himself, the sufferer cannot, as with the discharged soldier, gain acceptance and relief.

As Wordsworth's moral indignation mounts, so he piles emotive words or inverts his imagery to suggest the 'unnatural' world in which he finds himself. Thus he describes how, caught in the midst of performing animals and children, he moves away only to find himself in

Private Courts,
Gloomy as Coffins, and unsightly Lanes

Thrill'd by some female Vender's scream, belike
 The very shrillest of all London Cries,
 May then entangle us awhile,...

(VII, 196-200)

There is therefore no escape. One is caught up in the milling crowds, and as one drifts along, the ugly sounds and sights become uglier. Even the healthful and inspiring wind of the country is replaced by the "stragglings breezes of suburban air" (VII, 208). Indeed, as Wordsworth piles up his list of the hateful spectacles of "those mimic sights that ape/The absolute presence of reality" (VII, 248-49), London appears more and more like a circus without the spontaneity, the joy and disciplined freedom of the latter. The image reaches a climax as the poet recalls his visits to the theatre when, inspite of "frequent fits"

Of irksomeness, with ample recompense
 Saw Singers, Rope-dancers, Giants and Dwarfs,
 Clowns, Conjurers, Posture-masters, Harlequins,
 Amid the uproar of the rabblement,
 Perform their feats.

(VII, 291-96)

There is an undercurrent of a mild rebuke in these lines, directed against the indiscriminating 'audience' which responds with so much delight at the 'acting' of this incongruous assortment of performers. But when he is confronted with another kind performer and his audience, Wordsworth seems openly angry and contemptuous. In the London preacher and his audience, Wordsworth finds a perverse group whose aesthetic and moral sense is in a state of decay. As in Swift's Tubbian World, the 'preacher' makes no distinction between

the pulpit and the stage-itinerant. For his 'congregation', the sermon is just one of many frivolous shows. In the "holy Church", Wordsworth says,

There have I seen a comely bachelor,
 Fresh from a toilette of two hours, ascend
 The Pulpit, with seraphic glance look up,
 And, in a tone elaborately low
 Beginning, lead his voice through many a maze,
 A minuet course, and winding up his mouth,
 From time to time into an orifice
 Most delicate, a lurking eyelet, small
 And only not invisible, again
 Open it out, diffusing thence a smile
 Of rapt irradiation exquisite.

(VII, 546-56)

For all the seeming playfulness of these lines, the poet is in deadly earnest. We have, in fact, what seems to be an excellent parody of Chaucer's Pardoner on the pulpit. The repulsive combination of the most incompatible activities is here in full. The bachelor, the toilet, the pulpit and the seraphic glance: combine them and you have a grotesquely perverse creature clowning in clerical robes. The ogling look, the simulated voice, the glowing smile—all the tricks which symbolize the Pardoner's lust and deceit are made manifest in the London preacher. Even the 'humour' in the image of his voice winding through many a maze and descending into an orifice is grim. It is the tortuous and perverse thinking that is the focus of attention. And all he says must be backed by the divinity of the Scriptures and the authority of Literature, sacred and profane alike, to

lend ornament and flowers
 To entwine the Crook of eloquence with which
 This pretty Shepherd, pride of all the Plains,
 Leads up and down his captivated Flock.
 (VII, 562-65)

The scathing sarcasm and the sneering mood of the poet are unmistakable. The imagery is inverted. The 'shepherd' is not leading a congregation of devout believers, but a flock of sheep actively participating in a circus act. The pulpit has become the stage and the ambiguity of the word "captivated" suggests at once the flock's fascination and imprisonment in their own irreverent act. Add to these the roaming bands of blasphemous women, "open to shame/Abandon'd and the pride of public vice" (VII, 418-19), and it becomes clear why Wordsworth lashes so violently at the depravity and vice that fill this society. Like Dr. Johnson's London, Wordsworth's portrait of the city is intended to highlight the dominance of evil rather than be a faithful copy of what actually existed. He therefore exploits language for just the things that matter to him--"immediacy of effect, distinctness, impressiveness, memorability, depth of connotation, and closeness to reality."⁸

With regard to the effect of these experiences on his imagination, London is simply a larger and more damaging version of Wordsworth's life at Cambridge. The account of his 'residence in London' illustrates, in fact, an important remark he makes in the 1802 (revised) Preface to Lyrical Ballads where he states that

A multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discrim-

inating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies.⁹

The worst example he could find in London was the annual fair in Bartholomew's square. It is not just another of the many events in the city where men yield to passion with complete abandon. The hellish confusion paralyses the imagination of the spectator, "if any spectacle on earth can do" (VII, 653). The poet literally shrieks and recoils with the shock of recollection:

what a hell
For eyes and ears! what anarchy and din
Barbarian and infernal! 'tis a dream,
Monstrous in colour, motion, shape, sight, sound.
(VII, 658-62)

The emotive and opprobrious terms and the exclamations combine to show the revulsion and hysterical fear of one fleeing, as it were, from the approach of hell itself. The tone is one of utter alarm. The scene is the symbol of man in his "dullness" and "madness" (VII, 689), a "Parliament of Monsters" (VII, 691), a world of "blank confusion" (VII, 695) where the individual is completely absorbed by the crowd and loses his identity in

An undistinguishable world to men,
The slaves unrespite of low pursuits,
Living amid the same perpetual flow
Of trivial objects, melted and reduced
To one identity, by differences
That have no law, no meaning and no end....
(VII, 699-704)

One does not need to contrast this with the level tone and the conviviality of the summer festival at Helvellyn (VIII, 10-61) to feel its full force. As Professor Perkins has remarked, throughout Book VII, Wordsworth's "poetry voices frequent groans as his moral sensibilities are violated. 'Foolishness and madness in parade' is his summing up of the city."¹¹

But if Wordsworth groaned and repined at London's "loathsome sights/Of wretchedness and vice" (VIII, 65-66), he retained enough sanity to rejoice at man's condition. He had remained sane in the midst of general madness by dwelling on "high thoughts of God and Man, and love of Man" (VIII, 64). The return to the country was therefore, for Wordsworth, the journey back to his lost paradise (VIII, 144), and the recovery of his imaginative and spiritual vitality from the place where he found on all sides

The fragrance breathing of humanity,
Man free, man working for himself, with choice
Of time, and place, and object....
(VIII, 151-53)

And yet, Wordsworth is not making a facile separation between city and country. The country fair has its lame and blind and crippled entertainer or beggar but these are integrated members of their society and not people rejected and thrown aside with no one to look after them. Moreover, even those with no physical handicap had their fair share of human misery. The woodman, for example, "languish'd with disease/From sleeping night by night among the woods" (VIII, 611-12). Yet, he is not a mere symbol of a suffering country man; as an in-

tegral part of his society, he becomes a symbol of long-suffering without self-pity. Indeed Wordsworth's attitude to man in his natural surroundings shows a mixture of humility, joy and pride. Man is, in this setting, seen

As of all visible natures crown; and first
In capability of feeling what
Was to be felt; in being rapt away
By the divine effect of power and love,
As, more than anything we know instinct
With Godhead, and by reason and by will
Acknowledging dependency sublime.

(VIII, 634-40)

This picture of man as the crown of nature, and therefore its zenith and its ruler, is further enhanced by the religious imagery which points to his divinity and his union with God.

With this high conception of man, Wordsworth moves into France, and in Paris, gives himself up to the pleasures of the city with sheer animal delight:

Free as a colt at pasture on the hill,
I ranged at large, through the metropolis
Month after month.

(IX, 18-20)

His high spirits were due, in large measure, to the fact that the French Revolution had broken out. It was a time of universal joy, with

France standing on the top of golden hours,
And human nature seeming born again.

(VI, 353-54)

This is the language of boundless enthusiasm and inordinate hopes.

In the phrase of the 'golden hours', Wordsworth introduces his 'belief'

in the dawn of the millenium, the dreamt-of golden age which would bring happiness to all; and human nature undergoes a transformation, a rebirth, to receive and accommodate the age of general happiness.

But soon, the language of high hopes is replaced by the language of alarm, fear and confusion. The young enthusiast who picks a stone from the fallen Bastille as a sacred memento of the great hour soon forgets his enthusiasm, and his language becomes dotted with images of storms, sickness and plagues, earthquakes and deluges. The 'vital breeze' of creativity has become "a tempest, a redundant energy/Vexing its own creation" (I, 46-47). Even before he left Paris for Blois, Wordsworth admits,

I saw the revolutionary Power
Toss like a ship at anchor, rock'd by storms.
(IX, 48-49)

As W.H. Auden has pointed out, the ship as a tradition-symbol

is only used as a metaphor for society in danger from within or without. When society is normal the image is the City or the Garden. That is where people want and ought to be.¹¹

So this is not the ship from whose side Wordsworth hangs to explore the universe or make his spiritual voyage; elemental storms are, like the riotous city crowds and fairs, not conducive to the working of the imagination. But it is the destructive potential of the storm that makes it particularly appropriate as the controlling power of the French ship of state during the Revolution. And Wordsworth, probably aware of the full implications of the image of the storm-tossed ship, designates the brief internal peace which fol-

lowed the King's acceptance of the fact of the Revolution in 1791
as a time when

the first storm was overblown,
And the strong hand of outward violence
Lock'd up in quiet.

(IX, 108-10)

But like all locked up forces, the storm and its attendant violence built up pressure and erupted with such destructive force that the poet himself seems to have been thrown out of balance, uncertain about which images could characterise the new violence. Thus when the explosion came, Wordsworth saw "the land all swarm'd with passion, like a plain/Devour'd by locusts" (IX, 177-78) and the men who rode on the crests of the violent waves were "Powers/Like earthquakes" (IX, 180-81) sending shocks to every corner of the land. So a land denuded of its nourishment by a locust plague and trapped between the elemental furies of storm and earthquake goes mad, dancing to the tunes of martial music and welcoming destruction with waving banners. Wordsworth finds himself torn between his zeal for the Revolution and his ingrained hatred for violence and human suffering. His moods vary accordingly, sometimes elated by the successes of the cause he has embraced and at other times dejected and despairing over the shocking destruction that the Revolution left in its agonizingly tortuous path. His enthusiasm therefore waned for a while, but convinced that the Revolution was nature's "gift" to the world for the freedom of man, he rose in opposition to the advocates of violence, and the

Zeal which yet
 Had slumber'd, now in opposition burst
 Forth like a Polar Summer; every word
 They utter'd was ~~like~~ a dart, by counter-winds
 Blown back upon themselves. . . .

(IX, 258-62)

The image of the polar summer suggests a sustained onslaught; the dart refers to the severely painful feeling of the poet, while the image of wind overblowing wind, though primarily referring to the violent arguments of the opposing parties, suggests that the storm is still Wordsworth's basic image for the French Revolution.

In the midst of this destruction, Beaupuy becomes the symbol of the divinity in man, of sanity in the face of general madness, of passion spent in the service of man. Magnanimous and forgiving, "injuries"

Made him more gracious, and his nature then
 Did breathe its sweetness out most sensibly
 As aromatic flowers on Alpine turf
 When foot hath crush'd them.

(IX, 300-304)

He is thus elevated above the common reach of his fellows both by the religious language and his placement on the Alpine heights. The imagery suggests the fragrant beauty of his nature perfuming the putrid decay of the destroyers. He serves mankind with the devotion of one who is faithful to the oaths of "a religious order" (IX, 312). He is, in Wordsworth's mind, the incarnation of man's primeval purity and goodness and, as the poet recalls their discussions by the Loire or under the refreshing shade of a wood before the September Massacres, even his abstract language is charged with such

deep feeling that the emotions seem almost palpable to the reader.

Thus he recalls one of their pastimes

In painting to ourselves the miseries
Of Royal courts, and that voluptuous life
Unfeeling, where the Man who is of soul
The meanest thrives the most, where dignity,
True personal dignity, abideth not,
A light and cruel world, cut off from all
The natural inlets of just sentiment,
From lowly sympathy, and chastening truth,
Where good and evil never have that name,
That which they ought to have, but wrong prevails,
And vice at home.

(IX, 351-61)

Thus, with the swinging rhythm as if to convey the whirling emotions of the 'speakers', the parallelisms and antitheses all combine to impress on the mind the abstract emotive terms that dominate these lines, thereby eliciting the reader's sympathy for the poet's feeling of "virtuous wrath and noble scorn" (IX, 497). For Wordsworth, therefore, the overthrow of the monarchy was the overthrow of human misery, of falsehood and all the other vices that he associates with that institution. And when France became a Republic, the poet explodes with unrestrained joy in praise of his fellow 'patriots'.

Honour to the patriot's zeal!
Glory and hope to new-born Liberty!
Hail to the mighty projects of the time!
Discerning sword that Justice wields, do thou
Go forth and prosper....

(VI, 441-45, 1850)

This is the exclamation of a man in feverish excitement and appropriately enough, Wordsworth introduces the word 'enflamed' to qualify either his exuberant hopes, his almost religious faith in

the Revolution or his unquenchable thirst for information. But as the sword of justice became the symbol of armed power, the weapon of indiscriminate and undeserved massacres, Wordsworth overflows with anguish as he contemplates the "lamentable crimes ... in which the senseless Sword/Was pray'd to as a judge" (X, 31-34) --an image expressing the existence of a 'cult' which embraced violence with the fervour of religious faith.

Wordsworth's violent reaction to this turn of events is matched by his vitriolic language, especially in his references to the September Massacres which left France as "defenceless as a wood where tigers roam" (X, 82). The leader of this jungle world, the symbol of man's bestiality, was Robespierre, who, by leading the massacres, convinced Wordsworth that

all things have second birth;
The earthquake is not satisfied at once.
And in such way I wrought upon myself,
Until I seem'd to hear a voice that cried,
To the whole City, 'Sleep no more.'
(X, 73-77)

So the emergence of Robespierre is the rebirth of evil in one of its most destructive forms, the earthquake. 'Sleep no more' is Macbeth's cry after murdering his King. Therefore, Robespierre's action was, like Macbeth's, the subversion of the natural order. The threat of total destruction to all his most cherished hopes made Wordsworth utterly dejected and even seemingly irrational. Although, for example, France was the first to declare war on Great Britain, the latter's decision to fight brought on the poet "a conflict of sensations

without name" (X, 266), and in a mood of bitter resentment, he administers a stinging if unconscionable rebuke to his home land.

Britain's decision to go to war was an irreligious act directed against nature and instigated by "the unhappy counsel of a few weak Men" (X, 293): a statement which is so contradictory and illogical that it could only have been made under severe emotional stress. But in his anguish, Wordsworth continues to denounce the British and all those who took up arms against France for her excesses. Accusing them of aggression, he inverts his imagery so that the 'monster' becomes the great hero wreaking destruction upon the power of evil. The world was appalled by the horrors of the conflict, but

Meanwhile, the Invaders fared as they deserv'd;
The Herculean Commonwealth had put forth her arms
And throttled with an infant Godhead's might
The snakes about her cradle. . . .

(X, 362-65)

So France, the real aggressor, has become the Herculean hero inflicting death with overwhelming strength and an irresistible ferocity suggested in the telling onomatopoeia of 'throttled'. But for all his bias, Wordsworth continued to probe society in an effort to restore his hopes for man. In language that is in harmony with his violent mood, he says

I took the knife in hand
And stopping not at parts less sensitive,
Endeavoured with my best of skill to probe
The living body of society
Even to the heart. . .

(X, 873-77)

Although the result of this surgical operation on the body politic seems despairing, the situation was in fact not without hope.

Parallel with the examination of society was the poet's personal examination which revealed a change, but, in his own words, "I was no further chang'd/Than as^aclouded, not a waning moon" (X, 917-18).

In The Prelude, a cloud or a mist frequently represents the veil that stands between the poet and the rich world of the imagination. But a cloud is by nature unstable and ephemeral. The moon embodies the light of the imagination, so that when the cloud dissipates, the moon sheds its impartial light on all. For all his commitment to the Republican cause therefore, Wordsworth demonstrates his renewed power of sound judgment by displaying complete disgust at Napoleon's decision to be crowned emperor: it is "the dog/Returning to his vomit" (X, 935-36). But this cannot be the end, for just

as the desert hath green spots, the sea
Small islands in the midst of stormy waves,
So that disastrous period did not want
Such sprinklings of all human excellence
As were a joy to hear of. . . .
(X, 441-45)

And the embodiment of that human excellence was Beaupuy, the symbol of the divine essence in man which continued to burn bright in the midst of general decay. He was, therefore, the green spot in the desert of France, so that notwithstanding the destruction of the Reign of Terror, Wordsworth returned to England convinced that in France, freedom had found its impregnable sanctuary.

If the parts of The Prelude covered in this chapter do not have the vitality and richness of the opening and closing books of the poem, they show, nevertheless,

the wider range of Wordsworth's poetic powers. Moral and intellectual enthusiasm; personal affection and admiration; contacts with living history; soaring hopes for mankind; the drama of the Revolution, whether in glory or terror--these things also touch him to poetic utterance.¹²

But as Wordsworth reminds us in Book XI, The Prelude is the 'story' of a man's intellectual and spiritual journey conducted in a spirit of "love and joy" (XI, 44). The experiences in the cities and in France represent, therefore, the barren wastes and stormy seas through which one inevitably passes on such a journey. As the traveler approaches the end, he demands of us: "Call back to mind/The mood in which this poem was begun" (XIII, 370-71). Then reminding us that even during the worst period of the storms, he had maintained his inner calm because of his childhood contacts with nature, Wordsworth lifts himself

As if on wings, and saw beneath me stretch'd
Vast prospect of the world which I had been
And was, . . .

(XIII, 378-80)

This is therefore the symbolic triumph of the human spirit and the affirmation of the poet's commitment not to a part, but to the whole universe.

NOTES - CHAPTER ONE

On Imagery and Symbolism

1. Wordsworth, W. Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth. Ed. Paul M. Zall. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1966, 10.
2. Ibid., 13.
3. Marsh, Florence. Wordsworth's Imagery. Archon Books, Hamden, 1963 [1952], 113.
Both philosophers are quoted by Florence Marsh. But the designation--atomic theory of language--which I have used was probably a later development. It is the attitude which the quotations reveal that is important, although there were exceptions to this attitude. See Frazer's essay quoted below.
4. Wordsworth, W. Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth. Ed. Zall, 13.
5. Ibid., 12.
6. Ibid., 140.
7. Ibid., 140.
8. Ibid., 140.
9. Ibid., 141.
10. Ibid., 144.
11. Wordsworth, W. The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, The Middle Years. Ed. Ernest de Selincourt, Vol. II, 705. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937.
12. Wordsworth, W. Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth. Ed. Zall, 146.
13. Ibid., 67.
14. Ibid., 151-52.
15. Ibid., 148.

16. Coleridge, S.T. Biographia Literaria. Ed. J. Shawcross. 2 Vols.
London: Oxford University Press, 1907, Vol. 1, 194.
17. Wordsworth, W. Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth. Ed.
Zall, 147.
18. Miles, Josephine. Wordsworth and the Vocabulary of Emotion.
New York: Octagon Books, 1965 [1942], 86.
19. Wordsworth, W. Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth. Ed.
Zall, 42.
20. Ibid., 57.
21. Ibid., 129.
22. Ibid., 30. While illustrating his point, Wordsworth is unfair
to Dr. Johnson, since the latter was writing a Parody.
23. Wordsworth, W. The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth.
Ed. de Selincourt, 134-35.
24. Wordsworth, W. Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth. Ed.
Zall, 173.
25. Ibid., 25.
26. Ibid., 115.
27. Ibid., 118.
28. Ibid., 125.
29. Marsh, Wordsworth's Imagery, 139.
30. Wordsworth, Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth. Ed.
Zall, 163.
31. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria. Ed Shawcross. Vol. II, 16.
32. Lewis, C. Day. The Poetic Image. London: Jonathan Cape, 1966
[1947], 22.
33. Frazer, Ray. "The Origin of the Term Image", ELH, V. 27, 1960, 149.
34. Lewis, The Poetic Image, 34.

35. Wordsworth, Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth. Ed. Zall, 52.
36. Wimsatt, W.K., Jr. The Verbal Icon. Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, Noonday Edition, 1964 [1954], 111.
37. A typical example is F.W. Bateson's Wordsworth: A Reinterpretation where There Was a Boy which Wordsworth gave the place of honour at the beginning of his poems of the Imagination, comes in for some harsh criticism as in part a "facile sentimental elegy"--30.
38. Wellek and Warren. Theory of Literature. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1956 [1942].
39. Lewis, The Poetic Image, 40.
40. Wheelwright, Philip. The Burning Fountain: A Study in the Language of Symbolism. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1959 [1954], 24.

NOTES - CHAPTER TWO

Natural Imagery (1)

Wind and Water

1. This point is made by almost every critic of Wordsworth, but notably by J.W. Beach in The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth-Century English Poetry, chs. 1-3; J.W. Piper in The Active Universe, especially in chs. 1 and 3; and Basil Willey in The Eighteenth-Century Background, chap. 11 and 12, *passim*.
2. Abrams, M.H. "The Correspondent Breeze: A Romantic Metaphor" in English Romantic Poets. A Galaxy Book, New York: Oxford University Press, 1960, 38.
3. *Ibid.*, 39.
4. Legouis, E. The Early Life of William Wordsworth. Transl. J.W. Matthews. Dent and Sons, Ltd., London and Toronto, 1932 [1897], 461.
5. Lindenberger, Herbert. On Wordsworth's Prelude. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, 71.
6. Wordsworth, W. Poetical Works. Ed. Thomas Hutchinson. Revised by Ernest de Selincourt. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966 [1950], 88.
7. Sewell, Elizabeth. The Human Metaphor. University of Notre Dame Press, 1964, 91.
8. Wordsworth, W. The Prelude. Ed. Ernest de Selincourt. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965 [1959], 615.
9. Garrod, H.W. Wordsworth: Lectures and Essays. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954 [1923], 141.
10. Perkins, David. The Quest for Permanence: The Symbolism of Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965 [1959], 2.
Professor Perkins suggests that the representation of the poet as explorer or discoverer is common in Romantic poetry.
11. Lacey, Norman. Wordsworth's View of Nature and its Ethical Consequences. Hamden: Archon Books, 1965 [1948], 13.

12. Swift, Jonathan. A Selection of his Works. Ed. Philip Pinkus. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1965, 460.
Swift uses the phrase in the fable of the bee and the spider in A Battle of the Books. By his own confession, Wordsworth read and admired Swift. See Herbert Read's Wordsworth, 43.
13. MacLean, Kenneth. "The Water Symbol in The Prelude", UTQ, (July, 1948), 374.
14. Havens, R.D. The Mind of a Poet. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1941, Vol. 2, 313-14.
15. MacLean, "The Water Symbol in The Prelude", 376-77.
16. Ibid., 382.
17. Marsh, Florence. Wordsworth's Imagery. Hamden: Archon Books, 1963 [1952], 92.
She also quotes a poem, thought to be early, which uses the water-wind equation.
18. MacLean, "The Water Symbol in The Prelude", 387.
19. Ibid., 388.
20. Foakes, R.A. The Romantic Assertion. London: Methuen & Co., 1958, 46.
21. Marsh, Wordsworth's Imagery, 94-95, where she suggests that water is a natural image for the flow of the emotions, an aspect which MacLean omits.

NOTES - CHAPTER THREE

Natural Imagery (2)

Landscape and People

1. Havens, R.D. The Mind of a Poet. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1941, Vol. I, 39.
2. Sonn, C.R. "An Approach to Wordsworth's Earlier Imagery", ELH, XXVII, 1, (1960), 210.
3. Foakes, R.A. The Romantic Assertion. London: Methuen & Co., 1958, 62.
4. Bateson, F.W. Wordsworth: A Reinterpretation. London: Longmans, 1960 [1954].
5. De Quincey, quoted by H. Lindenberger in On Wordsworth's Prelude. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963, 42.
6. Perkins, David. The Quest for Permanence: The Symbolism of Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965 [1959], 18.
7. Bradley, A.C. Oxford Lectures on Poetry. London: Macmillan & Co., 1955 [1909], 137-38.
8. Bradley, Havens, Perkins and Herbert Read, to name a few notable examples of the first kind of approach, while Lindenberger, for example, thinks that the soldier pales into insignificance beside Wordsworth. See the latter, pages 84 and 208 respectively.
9. Lindenberger, Herbert. On Wordsworth's Prelude. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963, 211-12.
10. Ibid., 212.
11. Ibid., 213-14.
12. Jones, John. The Egotistical Sublime. London: Chatto & Windus, 1964 [1954], 31.
While making this important point, Mr. Jones's first major chapter seems to have serious contradictions. It stresses Wordsworth's literalness (15-16), hails "his understanding

of the relationship of inner and outer" as his principal claim to greatness (24) and then follows this with the suggestion that the poet's love of solitude has more to it than literal significance.

13. Baird, J.R. "Wordsworth's Inscrutable Workmanship and the Emblems of Reality", PMLA, LXVIII (1953), 453.
14. Auden, W.H. The Enchafèd Flood. New York: Random House, 1950, 6.
15. Perkins, The Quest for Permanence, 24.
16. Auden, The Enchafèd Flood, 14.
17. Ibid., 7.
18. Hartman, Geoffrey H. Wordsworth's Poetry: 1787-1814. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1964.
Hartman suggests that the flood in the dream in Book V might symbolize the flood of the imagination (see 228-30).
19. Perkins, The Quest for Permanence, 38.
20. Foakes, The Romantic Assertion, 60.

NOTES - CHAPTER FOUR

Imagery and Mood

1. Quoted by David Perkins in Wordsworth and the Poetry of Sincerity, Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1964, 140.
2. Havens, for example, points to the fine literary qualities of this portrait (387) without elaborating, while Perkins, The Quest for Permanence, and Lindenberger, On Wordsworth's Prelude, who devote space to the figure of the child hardly mention the child prodigy at all.
3. Wordsworth, W. The Prelude. Ed. Ernest de Selincourt. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965 [1959], 544.
4. Bishop, Jonathan. "Wordsworth and the "Spots of Time"", ELH, XXVI, No. 1, 1959, 51.
5. Perkins, David. The Quest for Permanence: The Symbolism of Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965 [1959], 24.
6. Lindenberger, Herbert. On Wordsworth's Prelude. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963, 233.
7. Hartman, Geoffrey H. Wordsworth's Poetry: 1787-1814. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1964, 241.
8. Perkins, David. Wordsworth and the Poetry of Sincerity. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1964, 93.
9. Wordsworth, W. Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth. Ed. Paul M. Zall. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1966, 43-44.
10. Perkins, Wordsworth and the Poetry of Sincerity, 120.
11. Auden, W.H. The Enchafèd Flood. New York: Random House, 1950, 8.
12. Groom, Bernard. The Unity of Wordsworth's Poetry. London: Macmillan & Co., 1966, 74.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A - PRIMARY SOURCES

- Wordsworth, W. The Early Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth. Ed. Ernest de Selincourt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935.
- . The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years, 2 vols. Ed. Ernest de Selincourt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937.
- . The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind. Ed. Ernest de Selincourt, 2nd ed, rev. H. Darbishire. London: Oxford University Press, 1959 [1926].
- . Poetical Works. Ed. Thomas Hutchinson, rev. by Ernest de Selincourt. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1960 [1936].
- . Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth. Ed. Paul M. Zall. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966.

- B - SECONDARY SOURCES

1. Books

- Abercrombie, Lascelles. The Art of Wordsworth. London: Cumberledge, 1952.
- Abrams, M.H., ed. English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1960.
- Arnold, Matthew. Essays in Criticism, 2nd series. London & New York: Macmillan & Co., 1936 [1888].
- Auden, W.H. The Enchafèd Flood: or, The Romantic Iconography of the Sea. New York: Random House, 1950.
- Barstow, Marjorie Latta. Wordsworth's Theory of Poetic Diction. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1957.
- Bateson, F.W. Wordsworth: A Reinterpretation. London: Longmans, Green, 1954.

- Beach, J.W. The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth-Century English Poetry. New York: Pageant Book, 1956 [1936].
- Beatty, Arthur. William Wordsworth: His Doctrine and Art in Their Historical Relations. 2nd ed. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1922.
- Benziger, James. Images of Eternity: Studies in the Poetry of Religious Vision, from Wordsworth to T.S. Eliot. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1962.
- Bradley, A.C. Oxford Lectures on Poetry. London: Macmillan & Co., 1955 [1909].
- Burton, Mary E. The One Wordsworth. Chapel Hill: Univ. of N. Carolina Press, 1942.
- Coleridge, T.S. Biographia Literaria. Ed. J. Shawcross. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1907.
- Darbshire, Helen. The Poet Wordsworth. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950.
- Fairchild, H.W. Religious Trends in English Poetry: 1790-1830 Romantic Faith, III. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1956 [1949].
- Ferry, David. The Limits of Mortality: An Essay on Wordsworth's Major Poems. Middletown: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1959.
- Foakes, R.A. The Romantic Assertion: A Study in the Language of Nineteenth-Century Poetry. London: Methuen & Co., 1958.
- Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism. New York: Atheneum, 1966. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, [1957].
- Garrod, H.W. Wordsworth: Lectures and Essays. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954 [1923].
- Gleckner, R.F., and G.E. Enscoe, eds. Romanticism: Points of View. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962.
- Groom, Bernard. The Unity of Wordsworth's Poetry. London: Macmillan & Co., 1966.
- Harper, G.M. William Wordsworth: His Life, Works and Influence. 3rd ed. New York: Scribner's, 1929.

- Hartman, Geoffrey H. Wordsworth's Poetry: 1787-1814. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1964.
- Havens, R.D. The Mind of a Poet: A Study of Wordsworth's Thought with Particular Reference to The Prelude. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1941.
- Jones, John. The Egotistical Sublime: A History of Wordsworth's Imagination. London: Chatto & Windus, 1954.
- King, Alec. Wordsworth and the Artist's Vision: An Essay in Interpretation. London: The Althone Press, 1966.
- Lacey, Norman. Wordsworth's View of Nature and its Ethical Consequences. Hamden: Archon Books, 1965 [1948].
- Legouis, Emile. The Early Life of William Wordsworth, 1770-1798: A Study of "The Prelude". Transl. J.W. Matthews, rev. ed. London and Toronto: Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1932 [1897].
- Lewis, C. Day. The Poetic Image. London: Jonathan Cape, 1965.
- Lindenberger, Herbert. On Wordsworth's Prelude. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963.
- Marsh, Florence. Wordsworth's Imagery: A Study in Poetic Vision. Hamden: Archon Books, 1963. Yale, [1952].
- Miles, Josephine. Wordsworth and the Vocabulary of Emotion. New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1965 [1942]. California Univ. Press,
- Perkins, David. The Quest for Permanence: The Symbolism of Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965 [1959].
- . Wordsworth and the Poetry of Sincerity. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1964.
- Piper, H.W. The Active Universe: Pantheism and the Concept of Imagination in the English Romantic Poets. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962.
- Prescott, F.C. The Poetic Mind. New York: Macmillan & Co., 1937 [1922].
- Read, Herbert. Wordsworth. London: Faber & Faber, 1958 [1933].

- Salvesen, Christopher. The Landscape of Memory: A Study of Wordsworth's Poetry. London: Edward Arnold, Ltd., 1965.
- Sewell, Elizabeth. The Human Metaphor. University of Notre Dame Press, 1964.
- Stallknecht, Newton P. Strange Seas of Thought: Studies in William Wordsworth's Philosophy of Man and Nature. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1958.
- Tindall, W.Y. The Literary Symbol. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1965.
- Todd, F.M. Politics and the Poet: A Study of Wordsworth. London: Methuen & Co., 1957.
- Wellek and Warren. Theory of Literature. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1956 [1942].
- Wheelwright, Philip. The Burning Fountain: A Study in the Language of Symbolism. Bloomington: Indian Univ. Press, 1959 [1954].
- Willey, Basil. The Eighteenth-Century Background: Studies on the Idea of Nature in the Thought of the Period. London: Chatto & Windus, 1941.
- Wimsatt, W.K., Jr. "The Structure of Romantic Nature Imagery" in The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry. Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press.

2. Articles

- Baird, J.R. "Wordsworth's Inscrutable Workmanship and the Emblems of Reality." PMLA, LXVIII (1953), 444-57.
- Bishop, Jonathan. "Wordsworth and the Spots of Time." ELH, XXVI (1959), 45-65.
- Darbishire, Helen. "Wordsworth and the Weather." REL, I, No. 3 (1960), 39-49.
- Empson, William. "The Active Universe." CritQ, V (1963), 267-71.

- Frazer, Ray. "The Origin of the Term Image." ELH, XXVII, 1960.
- Hartman, G.H. "Romanticism and 'Anti-Self-Consciousness.'" CRAS, VI (1962), 553-65.
- Jackson, T.H. "Wordsworth's 'Thought' and His Verse." CE, XXIV (1963), 277-84.
- Jordan, J.E. "Wordsworth's 'Minuteness and Fidelity.'" PMLA, LXII (1957), 433-45.
- Lainoff, Seymour. "Wordsworth's Final Phase: Visions of Eternity." SEL, I, No. 4 (1961), 63-79.
- Leyburn, Ellen D. "Recurrent Words in The Prelude." ELH, XVI (1949), 284-98.
- Lovejoy, A.O. "On the Discriminations of Romanticism." PMLA, XXXIX (1924), 229-53.
- MacLean, Kenneth. "The Water Symbol in The Prelude." UTQ (July, 1948), 372-89.
- . "Levels of Imagination in Wordsworth's Prelude." PQ, XXXVIII (1959), 385-400.
- Sonn, C.R. "An Approach to Wordsworth's Earlier Imagery." ELH, XXVII, No. 1, 1960.
- Stallknecht, N.P. "Nature and Imagination in Wordsworth's Meditation upon Mt. Snowdon." PMLA, LII (1937), 835-47.
- Stevenson, Lionel. "The Unfinished Gothic Cathedral: A Study of the Organic Unity of Wordsworth's Poetry." ITZ, XXXII (1963), 170-83.
- Weaver, Bennett. "Wordsworth: Poet of the Unconquerable Mind." PMLA, LXXV (1960), 231-37.
- . "Wordsworth's Prelude: The Poetic Function of Memory." SP, XXXIV (1937), 552-63.
- . "Wordsworth's Prelude: The Shaping Spirit." SP, XXXVII (1940), 75-87.
- Willey, Basil. "When Men and Mountains Meet." ES, XLIII (1962), 378-83.

